PAUL D. WILLIAMS

WAR & CONFLICT IN AFRICA

SECOND EDITION FULLY REVISED & UPDATED

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For Ariela and Zoë, with love

War & Conflict in Africa

PAUL D. WILLIAMS

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First edition published in 2011 by Polity Press This edition published in 2016 by Polity Press Polity Press

65 Bridge Street

Cambridge CB2 1UR, UK

Polity Press

350 Main Street

Malden, MA 02148, USA

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ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-0904-1

ISBN-13: 978-1-5095-0905-8 (pb) A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset in 9.5 on 13 pt Swift Light by Toppan Best-set Premedia Limited Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives PLC

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Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project
ACIRC	African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises
ACSS	Africa Centre for Strategic Studies
ADC	*Alliance Démocratique du 23 Mai 2006 pour le Changement* (Mali)
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (Uganda)
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo–Zaire
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission in Mali
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Sierra Leone)
AMIB	AU Mission in Burundi
AMIS	AU Mission in Sudan
AMISEC	AU Mission for Support to the Elections in the Comoros
AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia
APC	All People's Congress (Sierra Leone)
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AQIM	*Al-Qa'ida* in the Islamic Maghreb
ASF	African Standby Force
ATNMC	*Alliance Touareg Nord-Mali pour le Changement* (Mali)
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CDF	Civil Defence Force (Sierra Leone)
CDR	*Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (Rwanda)
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (IGAD)
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System (AU)

CIJ	Coalition for International Justice
CNDP	*Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple* (DRC)
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Sudan, 2005)
CPDTF	Commonwealth Police Development Task Force
DDR	disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DLF	Darfur Liberation Front
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EASF	Eastern Africa Standby Force
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOMICI	ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EIJM	Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
EUFOR	EU Force
EUFOR RD	EU Reserve Deployment Force
EUSEC	EU Security Sector Reform Mission
FAC	Congolese Armed Forces
FARDC	*Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (DRC)
FDLR	*Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*
FIS	*Front Islamique du Salut* (Algeria)
FLEC	Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave
FLN	*Front de Libération Nationale* (Algeria)
FN	*Forces Nouvelles* (Côte d'Ivoire)

FOMUC	CEMAC Multinational Force in the Central African Republic
GAF	Guinean Armed Forces
GDP	gross domestic product
GIA	Armed Islamic Group
GIZ	German Development Agency
GNI	gross national income
GSPC	Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat
HIPC	heavily indebted poor countries
HIPPO	High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations
HRW	Human Rights Watch
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement (Uganda)
HSR	Human Security Report
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	improvised explosive device
IFI	international financial institution
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity (Liberia)
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies (UK)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISR	intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement (Sudan)
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

MAES	AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account (US)
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (Nigeria)
MFDC	Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (Senegal)
MICOPAX	Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic
MINUCI	UN Mission in Côte d'Ivoire
MINURCA	UN Mission in the Central African Republic
MINURCAT	UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MINURSO	UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MIOC	AU Military Observer Mission in the Comoros
MISAB	Inter-African Peace Force (Central African Republic)
MISCA	AU Mission in Central African Republic
MJP	Patriotic Youth Movement (Côte d'Ivoire)
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of Congo (DRC)
MNJ	*Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice* (Niger)
MNJTF	Multinational Joint Task Force
MNLA	*Mouvement National de Liberation de l'Azawad*
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MONUA	UN Observer Mission in Angola
MONUC	UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUSCO	UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (Nigeria)

MPCI	*Mouvement Patriotique de Côte d'Ivoire*
MPIGO	Ivorian Movement of the Great West
MPLA	*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*
MRND	National Revolutionary Movement for Development (Rwanda)
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCP	National Congress Party (Sudan)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIF	Neutral International Force (Rwanda)
NLC	National Liberation Council (SPLM)
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	overseas development assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
OLMEE	OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia–Eritrea
OMC	Observation and Monitoring Centre (ECOWAS)
OMIB	UN Observer Mission in Burundi
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front (Ethiopia)
ONUB	UN Operation in Burundi
ONUC	UN Operation in the Congo
ONUMOZ	UN Operation in Mozambique
PGE	Provisional Government of Eritrea
PITF	Political Instability Task Force (US)
POLISARIO	Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Western Sahara)
PSC	Peace and Security Council (of the AU)

RCD	Congolese Rally for Democracy (DRC)
RECs	Regional Economic Communities (Africa)
RENAMO	the Mozambican Resistance Movement
RFDG	Rally of Democratic Forces of Guinea
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SAC	structural adjustment credit
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADR	Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
SEA	sexual exploitation and abuse
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLM/A	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SRRA	Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association
SSR	security sector reform
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (Somalia)
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TSZ	temporary security zone (Ethiopia–Eritrea)
UAV	unmanned aerial vehicle
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Programme
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts (Somalia)
UK	United Kingdom
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNAMIR	UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda

UNAMSIL	UN Mission in Sierra Leone
UNASOG	UN Aouzou Strip Observer Group
UNAVEM	UN Angola Verification Mission
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNITAF	Unified Task Force (Somalia)
UNMEE	UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNMIS	UN Mission in Sudan
UNMISS	UN Mission in South Sudan
UNOCI	UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNOMIL	UN Observer Mission in Liberia
UNOMSIL	UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNOMUR	UN Observer Mission in Rwanda–Uganda
UNOSOM	UN Mission in Somalia
UNSOA	UN Support Office for AMISOM
UPDA	Ugandan People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Ugandan People's Defence Force
US	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organization
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

Acknowledgements

Since the manuscript for the first edition of this book was submitted to Polity in late 2010, Africa has experienced a significant rise in conflict events and organized violence. This fact alone made it appropriate to write a revised and updated edition. In making these revisions I have left the structure of the original book intact and instead provided updated information and added new subsections and case studies where appropriate. Five years on, I stand by my original arguments and overall conclusions. I have, however, devoted more attention to the many non-state armed conflicts afflicting the continent as well as recent developments concerning the roles of resources and religion in organized violence.

In the course of writing the first edition of this book, I accrued a number of debts and I am pleased to reiterate them here. First of all, the generosity, support and constructive criticism of two good friends, Alex Bellamy and Ian Taylor, were invaluable. Over nearly two decades Alex and I have collaborated on numerous projects, and my thinking on a whole range of issues, especially peace operations and mass atrocities, owes a great deal to his insights. He provided extensive comments on the original manuscript. It is also nearly two decades since Ian welcomed a strange PhD student into his home in South Africa, and he has been teaching me things about politics in Africa ever since. We also worked together on various projects related to Africa's international relations and I have learned a great deal in the process. Ian, too, offered suggestions about how to improve the original manuscript.

I also remain grateful to Stuart Croft, Jon Elliott, Lee Ann Fujii, Linda Melvern and Polity's two anonymous readers who provided many constructive suggestions on how to improve the original manuscript. Whatever its shortcomings, this book is definitely better because of their comments. Naturally, I am solely responsible for any remaining errors.

Many of the ideas in this book were incubated in discussions I had with the MA students who took my ‘War and Conflict in Africa’ class at the Elliott School of International Affairs. Whether or not they appreciated it at the time, I learned a great deal during our seminars. I hope they did too and that

the finished product might prove useful in the important work many of them are doing related to Africa. The first edition of this book also benefited from the research assistance provided by three Elliott School students: Matthew Hughes compiled the index to the first edition, while Dmitriy Synkov provided the current version; Matthew Hickey collected documentation related to Africa's sub-regional arrangements; and Katrina Timlin located and summarized various studies relevant to the chapter on religion and provided feedback on the Introduction.

At Polity, I am pleased to acknowledge the help and advice I received from the excellent team of Nekane Tanaka Galdos and, as ever, Louise Knight, who expertly shepherded me through the publication process. Polity remains a model for what scholarly publishing should be about.

Conducting research on African issues can be expensive. While writing the first edition of this book, I was fortunate to receive financial support which facilitated travel, research assistance and relevant interviews from the UK's Economic and Research Council's New Security Challenges programme and the Elliott School of International Affairs. For the second edition, I continue to owe a debt of gratitude to the Elliott School of International Affairs, and especially its former Dean Michael E. Brown, for providing financial support for my research through the SOAR initiative.

I also want to say thank you to the many people within governments, international organizations, NGOs, academia and the general public who provided me with relevant documents or took the time to discuss with me issues of war and peace in Africa.

Finally, the love and support I receive from my wife, Ariela Blätter, continues to make everything possible. In June 2013 our little family expanded when she brought our daughter Zoë into this world. Zoë has already taught us a great deal about how to handle conflict. But she has not, yet, made it to Africa. I hope that when she does, she will be able to see a continent that has overcome the many challenges raised by wars and other forms of armed conflict.

PDW

Washington DC, August 2015

Introduction

War and conflict in contemporary Africa have cost the continent dear in many respects: they have killed many millions of people, most through the effects of disease and malnutrition exacerbated by displacement; they have left in their wake a traumatized generation of children and young adults; they have broken bonds of trust among and across local communities that will be immensely difficult to repair; they have shattered education and healthcare systems; they have disrupted transportation routes and infrastructure; and they have done untold damage to the continent's ecology, from its land and waterways to its flora and fauna. They have also had huge opportunity costs with many governments spending large sums on armed forces rather than investing in national infrastructure, healthcare and constructive education. Yet, for all the powerful statistics, there are still no clear answers as to *why* these terrible things happened. As Krijn Peters and Paul Richards concluded, unfortunately, 'much of the hard work in explaining recent African wars remains to be done'.[1]

The first aim of this book therefore is to try and understand why Africa experienced so many armed conflicts after the Cold War. The second aim is to examine how international society tried to end those wars and reduce the risk of future conflicts on the continent. To do this, the book addresses three central questions: first, what were the main trends in Africa's armed conflicts after the Cold War?, second, what accounts for those armed conflicts?, and, third, how did international society try and bring them to an end? The book's three parts – contexts, ingredients and responses – reflect these central concerns.

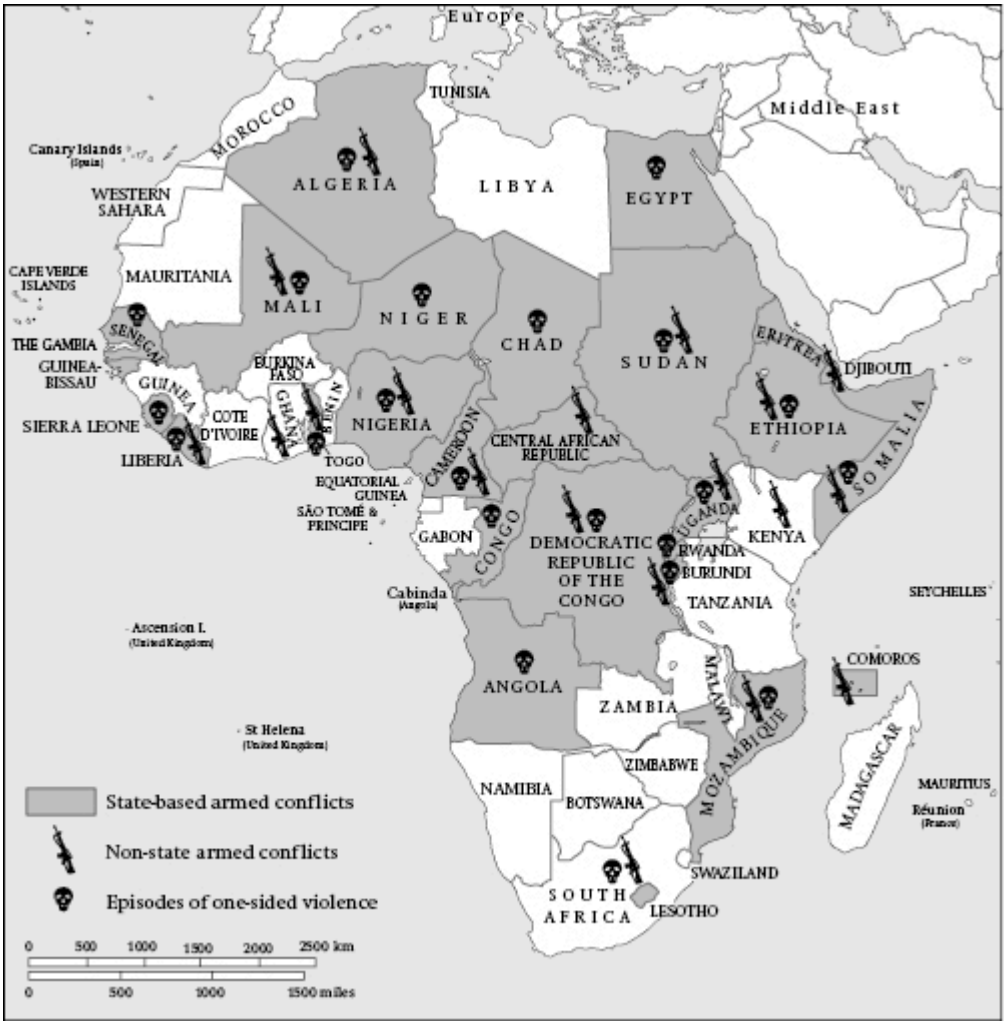

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Figure I.3 *Africa 2010–2015*

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With regard to terminology, I define conflict as the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups. My focus here is on a subset of conflict, namely, warfare, defined as the use of organized violence by collectivities for political purposes which results in casualties. Warfare is not characterized solely by violence but is a social and political condition which affects the lives of those touched by it in many different ways, not all of which relate directly to acts of violence.[2] By politics, I mean the process through which individuals and groups decide who gets what, when and how.[3]

My central argument can be summarized in two related parts, which reflect the two worlds of Africa's armed conflicts: those rooted in the African state system and those conflicts that occur on the margins or outside of that

system. First, with regard to wars rooted in Africa's society of states, I draw on the major insight of the war and society approach, namely, that the nature of armed conflict in post-Cold War Africa is in many respects a consequence of state–society relations and the particular dynamics associated with the politics of regime survival across much of the continent.[4] Specifically, regime survival strategies often provided the crucial intersection between local political dynamics and international networks, structures and processes.[5] Particularly when a regime's legitimacy was challenged, these strategies frequently involved instrumentalizing disorder and using violence to assert authority. It is in this sense that most of Africa's state-based wars owe a great deal to the combustible mix of state institutions which struggled to maintain legitimacy among the domestic population and the political strategies of regimes seeking to preserve their privileged status within this context.

Second, by failing to control their territory, encouraging unprofessional security forces, and weakening traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, these regime strategies also encouraged the other, non-state world of armed conflicts in Africa. These more numerous but generally smaller struggles were waged by non-state groups, including tribes, clans and militias, often over their principal sources of livelihood, notably issues connected to water and land. They rarely attracted much diplomatic or media attention because they did not directly reconfigure Africa's state system and they usually took place in peripheral areas. But they too were a product of the failures of some African governments to build effective states and genuinely national governance structures. In the period since 1990, most of these non-state conflicts were fought in just six African countries: Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and DRC.

Why Africa?

In this book, Africa refers to the territory of the 54 members of the African Union (AU) plus Morocco. My focus on the continent is not meant to suggest there is something exceptional about the reasons why Africans fight – indeed, as one scholar noted, ‘African conflicts are remarkably unexceptional’.[6] They are fought for reasons as complex as those fought elsewhere. As even a cursory examination of recent conflicts in the Balkans,

the Caucasus, South and Southeast Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East illustrates, debates about how governance structures, resources, sovereignty, ethnicity or religion are related to warfare are certainly not restricted to Africa.

The first reason to focus on Africa is the sheer volume of armed conflicts the continent experienced over the last quarter of a century. In addition, two trends make post-Cold War Africa a particularly interesting case. First, during the 1990s it suffered from a rise in the number of armed conflicts as other parts of the developing world were experiencing a significant reduction. Thus, by the start of the twenty-first century, more people were being killed in Africa's wars than in the rest of the world combined.[7] The UN Development Programme called it ‘a decade of despair’ wherein fifty-four countries, many of them African, ended up less developed at the start of the twenty-first century than they had been in 1990.[8] Second, the average number of armed conflicts in Africa starting each year during the 1990s was twice that of the previous decade.[9] This begs the question, why? What happened in Africa before or during the 1990s that can account for these trends?

The news was still appalling during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Between 1999 and 2008, for instance, Africa experienced thirteen major armed conflicts, the highest total for any region of the world.[10] And yet some good news did start to emerge. By 2006 more than half of these conflicts had come to an end and the downward trend continued through to the end of the decade.[11] The news was also more positive when comparing Africa to the rest of the world: whereas in 1999 Africa accounted for nearly half of the world's major armed conflicts, by 2008 it was home to just one in five.[12] (The continent represents just over one-quarter of the UN's member states and just under one-sixth of the world's population.) Since 2011, however, Africa has experienced a significant rise in organized violence and a related increase in episodes of violence against civilians (see chapter 1). This was largely due to major new wars in Libya, Mali, South Sudan and Central African Republic as well as escalating conflicts in Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan. Africa also continued to experience a majority of the world's non-state armed conflicts during this period.[13]

A second reason to focus on Africa is that it challenges some of the standard conceptual frameworks used by students of contemporary war. Not least, it raises difficult questions for the trinitarian view of warfare popularized by Carl von Clausewitz's unfinished classic *On War*.[14] African cases often blurred the distinctions between Clausewitz's central categories of the government, the military and society. Consequently, they rarely sat comfortably within the nationalist frame of reference with which Clausewitz was operating and require different tools of analysis which capture today's more tangled and transnationalized state–society relations.[15]

A third rationale is that Africa's wars commonly suffered from rather simplistic explanations or – even worse – depictions that verged on the racist. Too many outsiders have looked at African war zones and seen little other than an inexplicable and exotic blend of modern technology and pre-modern (often irrational) barbarism. A closer look, however, reveals that, while psychotic individuals were usually present, as they are across the world's conflict zones, their presence alone does not explain why Africa's wars occurred or why these conflicts assumed the forms they did.

Finally, Africa suffers from some of the most intractable conflicts on the planet. The difficulty of resolving them was particularly evident if measured by the number of peace agreements warring parties signed but which either collapsed or failed to produce anything remotely resembling stable peace. The conflicts in Liberia and Somalia, for example, both resulted in the collapse of over a dozen peace agreements of one sort or another. South Sudan's bickering elites were approaching this total in just 18 months of civil war. Africa's conflict zones therefore posed severe headaches for the world's mediators and its peacekeepers, who by late 2015 were at record numbers of over 110,000 uniformed personnel.[16] These conflict zones also proved to be some of the most difficult laboratories for international attempts to provide humanitarian assistance and promote development.

Understanding Africa's Wars: From Causes to Recipes

Accounting for Africa's glut of armed conflicts is a daunting task. First, there is the huge problem of gathering accurate information. Not only is it sometimes dangerous to collect, there is also no consensus on what analysts should be looking for. Simply put, our data about what goes on before, during and after Africa's wars are poor. It is therefore important to acknowledge at the outset that when it comes to Africa's war zones the foundations of our knowledge are distinctly shaky. This is a particularly important – and usually under-acknowledged – issue for quantitative studies about the continent's wars. As discussed in chapter 1, analysts have regularly disagreed on the basic question of how many armed conflicts were going on at any given time. In part, this problem came down to different analysts adopting different definitions of war and civil war, but also of drawing rigid distinctions between different forms of lethal violence, particularly that associated with criminal activity and homicides and more explicitly 'political' violence.[17] But it was exacerbated by the difficulties of collecting accurate information about what was happening on the ground.

A second, more philosophical challenge is that there is always more than one story to tell about why a particular armed conflict occurred. The search for a single, all-encompassing theory of what causes warfare, or even what caused a particular war, has been a source of controversy for a long, long time. Indeed, there is probably much to be said for the historian's preference to limit oneself to understanding the origins of particular wars rather than searching for the causes of warfare in general. Dissatisfaction with a focus on direct causation has led a variety of analysts to frame their theories of violence in terms of increasing/decreasing probabilities and greater/lesser levels of risk.[18] Nevertheless, the search for a general theory of warfare has persisted, with two approaches proving particularly durable: those which frame the causes of war as a level-of-analysis problem and those which locate the fundamental cause of organized violence in human biology/genetics.[19] While I think the former approach is far more useful for this book (see chapter 2), I agree with Michael Brown's conclusion that 'the best scholarly studies of internal conflict are powerful precisely because

they do not rely on single-factor explanations. Instead they try to weave several factors into a more complex argument.'[20]

With this in mind, it is useful to recall several broad distinctions which have been used to help think about complex stories of war occurrence. The first is between necessary conditions and sufficient conditions. In relation to warfare, necessary conditions are those things which must exist in order for war to occur – i.e. without X, war cannot occur. At a very basic level, the capacity for humans to form political communities and demonstrate the ability to kill one another is necessary in the sense that it is logically presupposed by the definition of war used here.[21] We might also say that, because war is a matter of choice, acts of belligerence and acts of resistance are necessary conditions for war.[22] Sufficient conditions, in contrast, are phenomena which, if present, enable us to know war will break out – i.e. if X, then war will follow. At the abstract level, we might suggest that the existence of several factors simultaneously might meet the definition of a sufficient condition for war. For example, when groups of humans with the ability to kill one another exist, and when one group's belligerent act is met with an act of resistance by another group, war will occur. In more practical terms, however, to my knowledge, the vast literature on the causes of war has failed to identify any convincing examples of empirical phenomena which satisfy the definition of being a sufficient condition for war. In this sense, the distinction between necessary conditions and sufficient conditions is not particularly useful for tackling the questions posed in this book.

A more useful distinction is between underlying or permissive factors and catalytic or trigger factors.[23] While the former identify dispositions which make organized violence more likely, they do not allow us to explain why wars break out in some cases where these underlying factors are present but not in others. Trigger factors, on the other hand, emphasize the fact that, to engage in warfare/armed conflict, particular actors must choose to do so – i.e. at a basic level one must choose to go on the offensive or to resist attack rather than surrender. Triggers thus refer to those forces or factors which generate actions or policies that represent the conscious choices of particular actors to engage in political violence.

In one sense, therefore, this book can be seen as a challenge to some of the more popular approaches to thinking about Africa's wars which reduce their complexity to a single issue or binary problems. Among the most common of these ‘big ideas’ is the tendency to blame Africa's wars on colonialism, postcolonial elites, ethnicity and greedy criminals, respectively.

Especially within Africa, colonialism is often identified as the root cause of the continent's current wars. As one analyst recently argued, ‘There is hardly any zone of conflict in contemporary Africa that cannot trace its sordid violence to colonial history.’[24] The usual mechanisms of colonial responsibility were said to be the favouring of particular local groups over others and the drawing of arbitrary borders which forced different peoples to live together – or split similar peoples apart – thus sowing the seeds of discord and exacerbating the likelihood of war. The basic problem with this argument is that, while colonialism is an important underlying factor, it is not a principal cause or trigger of contemporary conflicts. Colonialism certainly represents a piece of Africa's war puzzle, but as an explanation for the continent's contemporary conflicts it is flimsy. Among its biggest problems are the fact that colonialism was far from monolithic in both its practices and legacies and that significant portions of postcolonial Africa (and elsewhere) have remained free from armed conflicts; it does not explain why the 1980s, 1990s and early 2010s, in particular, proved to be such devastating periods for the continent; and it almost entirely eliminates African agency and responsibility from wars fought predominantly by Africans.

A second common argument, this time at the opposite end of the colonial responsibility spectrum, was to put the blame firmly on Africa's postcolonial ruling elites.[25] It was hardly surprising that Tony Blair's Commission for Africa, for example, suggested that Africa's fundamental problem was its lack of ‘good governance’ – the polite way of saying that peace would require stamping out the continent's ‘big man culture’ which was the root cause of its wars and underdevelopment.[26] But African initiatives have also blamed local politicians. Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for instance, concluded that the primary cause of its civil war ‘was years of bad governance, endemic corruption and the denial of basic human rights that created the deplorable conditions that made conflict inevitable’.[27] Other variants of this view suggested that

neighbouring regimes and diasporas were often more responsible for Africa's contemporary wars than former colonial powers. While this perspective brought African agency back in, its focus on local triggers downplayed the international forces and structures which increased the risks of war on the continent, such as the global trade in conflict goods, the deeply divisive policies promoted by international financial institutions, and the practice of adopting international business as usual with what Robert Jackson famously described as ‘quasi-states’ – those political entities granted juridical sovereignty despite their lack of domestic legitimacy (see chapter 5).[28]

A third big idea was that, in Africa, ethnicity kills. According to this view, Africa's wars were basically tribal conflicts fought between competing ethnic groups.[29] This tended to appear in two main varieties: the ‘ethnic hatreds’ and ‘ethnic fears’ perspectives.[30] The former suggested that hatred of different ethnic groups persisted over generations but remained dormant or simmered until something triggered an explosion of mass violence against the hated group. In the second variant, political leaders and other elites stoked mass fear of some ethnic ‘other’ using media, organized riots, arbitrary arrests, etc., in order to further their political agendas. The ensuing insecurity dilemma pushed ordinary people to react violently. As discussed in chapter 6, the big problems here were twofold. First, ethnic difference explained virtually nothing – and certainly not why groups went to war. Even in the hatreds and fears versions noted above, it was emotions (hatred and fear) that were doing at least as much explanatory work as ethnic solidarity. Second, even when understood as an underlying condition for violence, the fact remained that, during the post-Cold War period, Africa's most ethnically diverse states were among its most peaceful. On the other hand, African countries where ethnic differences were minimal (e.g. Rwanda) or virtually non-existent (e.g. Somalia) were among the bloodiest.

A fourth popular explanation for Africa's wars put the blame squarely on greedy warlords. Championed by a group of economists associated with the World Bank, this approach argued that civil wars were caused either by political grievances or by economic opportunities and, since grievances were virtually omnipresent in Africa but civil wars were not, the answer must lie on the economic/greed side of the equation. Africa's wars were therefore blamed on greedy criminals – indeed, insurgency itself was

conceptualized as being like any other criminal activity, except that it was rarer than petty theft because of the greater risks and the significant start-up costs incurred.[31] This greed thesis proved hugely popular with policymakers but it too suffered from many serious problems (see chapter 4). Perhaps its most fundamental errors were to suggest the study of the causes of war was synonymous with the study of individual motivations and that greed and grievance were clearly separable categories when in fact there has never been such a thing as an apolitical war.[32] Indeed, it was revealing that the main advocates of this approach, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, changed their tune: after years of apparently proving that civil wars were all about economic motives they launched their new 'feasibility thesis' – the idea that 'where civil war is feasible it will occur without reference to motivation'.[33]

In light of these points, it would be better to discard these 'big ideas' about the principal cause of Africa's wars and instead think about the many different recipes for making wars and the multiple ingredients which go into them.[34] Thinking of warfare in culinary terms may sound odd, but the metaphor is useful for several reasons. First, wars are complex social systems and, like particular dishes, are comprised of multiple ingredients. Second, because the ingredients can be combined in a variety of different ways, recipes, like wars, don't always turn out as planned and, as with wars, it pays to have the correct instruments to hand at the right time or else the recipe will be ruined. Third, like wars, recipes don't make themselves – there must be cooks, and it is important to know whether one is dealing with a novice or a master chef. As any beginner in the kitchen will testify, a list of ingredients is little use without details about the proportions, preparation techniques and cooking instructions as to which separate items should be combined to produce the dish in question. So it is with the causes of war. Moreover, there is always scope to develop new twists on old recipes or invent new or fusion dishes, just as humans have proved inventive at finding different things to fight about.

Darfur's Recipe for War

Take the case of the war in Darfur, Sudan, which erupted in 2003. Clearly the immediate trigger was the formation of insurgent organizations which

had the motives, means and opportunity to engage in armed resistance against the government's belligerence. But what were the factors that made this possible? What were the main ingredients and who were the principal chefs in Darfur's recipe for war?

One perspective suggested the key ingredient was the oppressive nature of the longstanding relationship between the dominant core of Khartoum and Sudan's marginalized peripheral zones. The key chefs were the military and theocratic elites which propped up President al-Bashir's regime. As Douglas Johnson put it, in many respects, Sudan was little more than ‘a constellation of underdeveloped regions’.[35] After decades of marginalization, Darfur's war was triggered by local resistance groups who demanded a greater say in the region's governance and a better deal from the country's repressive centre.

A related argument described the war as an almost inevitable consequence of the ‘turbulent’ nature of the Sudanese state.[36] Specifically, it was the product of a Sudanese state governed by a hyper-dominant but politically unstable centre characterized by competing elite factions in Khartoum, none of which had been able to establish complete dominance over the others. The result of this longstanding and inherently turbulent state of affairs was that ‘provincial war and destabilization’ became ‘the habitual modus operandi of the Khartoum elites’.[37]

A third view saw the key ingredient as ethnic tensions between Darfur's ‘Arab’ and ‘African’ populations, but once again they were manipulated by Khartoum's war chefs. The local ‘lighter-skinned’ ‘Arab’ fighters, commonly labelled as the *janjawiid*, were aroused, armed and supported by the government of Sudan and promised various rewards, mainly land and plunder, in exchange for their efforts to put down the rebellious ‘black’ ‘Africans’.[38]

A fourth perspective pointed to religious ingredients, specifically the intra-Islamic dimensions of the conflict and the struggle over what should count as the authentic version of Islam and what its relationship should be to the apparatus of the Sudanese state.[39] These disputes rose to a new level of intensity with the distribution in May 2000 of *The Black Book: Imbalance of Power and Wealth in Sudan*. The book was heavily critical of the ruling National Islamic Front and its inability to govern Sudan according to

appropriate Islamic codes.[40] Calling themselves ‘The Seekers of Truth and Justice’, the authors of *The Black Book* were members of the Islamist movement aligned against President Bashir and who would later go on to become influential architects of the rebel group Justice and Equality Movement (JEM).

A fifth set of views emphasized that war in Darfur could not have been cooked up without the longstanding system of regional conflicts that had developed since the 1960s between Sudan, Chad, Libya and, to a lesser extent, the Central African Republic. From this perspective, the current conflict was simply the latest episode in which Darfur became involved in a violent cycle of cross-border dynamics. This time around, the principal chefs of various proxy wars were the regimes in Khartoum and N'djamena.[41]

Finally, there were those who argued that war was precipitated by a structural brew of resource scarcity and changing environmental conditions. This resource-based argument had many variants. One version saw the key ingredient as being ‘land envy’ rather than ‘ethnic hatred’.[42] The UN's Special Envoy to Darfur, for example, said this was in essence a ‘fight about grass’ between Arab nomadic herders and African pastoralists.[43] A second variant saw climate change as a key ingredient, with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon concluding that the underlying problem was an ‘ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change’.[44]

The war in Darfur was thus framed simultaneously as a war about governance, the state and issues of self-determination; as an ethnic conflict; as religious fratricide; and as a resource war. Were all these explanations equally accurate? Were all these factors equally significant? Were any of them sufficient or even necessary to have caused the war? The answer to all three questions is almost certainly ‘no’. But they were all arguably ingredients in Darfur's recipe for war.

Structure of the Book

With this in mind, the book's structure revolves around the three central questions noted above. Part I, ‘Contexts’, provides an overview of the statistical, conceptual and political background on which I base the

subsequent analysis of the key ingredients in, and international responses to, Africa's wars. Chapter 1 analyses several attempts to count the number and scale of Africa's armed conflicts, focusing particularly on the post-Cold War period. Chapter 2 provides a conceptual and political sketch of the terrain of struggle upon which they were waged. Conceptually, it concentrates on social forces and state–society complexes and frames Africa's wars as a levels-of-analysis problem. The chapter then summarizes and explains the central political characteristics of Africa's post-Cold War conflict zones.

Part II, ‘Ingredients’, reflects upon the period since 1990 in order to understand the relationship between five issues and Africa's armed conflicts. These chapters do not provide an exhaustive list of ingredients, but I believe they address the most widely debated issues related to Africa's wars during this period, namely, governance, resources, sovereignty, ethnicity and religion. Chapter 3 analyses the extent to which governance was related to Africa's armed conflicts by focusing on dynamics within the neopatrimonial regimes found in many of the continent's weak states. In chapter 4, I assess the extent to which so-called natural resources were a key ingredient in Africa's wars. Chapter 5 tackles the key issues related to statehood and armed conflict, namely sovereignty and the associated concept of self-determination. In chapter 6, I examine the construction and manipulation of ethnic identities as an ingredient in warfare, while chapter 7 discusses the relationship between warfare and one of the most powerful belief systems known to humans: religion.

Part III, ‘Responses’, also reflects on the twenty-five years since the end of the Cold War but this time analysing the major international efforts to end Africa's wars. Chapter 8 examines international efforts to build a new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which despite its title was a collaborative enterprise between African and non-African states and organizations. After providing an overview of this architecture and some of its limitations, the focus of chapters 9 and 10 is on its two main policy instruments: peacemaking initiatives and peace operations. The former discusses international attempts to build stable peace through mediation, while the latter examines the major challenges that confronted the scores of peace operations which were deployed to the same end. Finally, chapter 11

analyses the main challenges faced by the two principal forms of external aid to Africa's war zones: humanitarian relief and development assistance.

The conclusion briefly summarizes the main findings from parts II and III and reflects upon what they might mean for designing more effective responses to warfare in the future.

Notes

1 Peters and Richards, ‘Understanding’, p. 445.

2 On which, see Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos*.

3 Lasswell, *Politics*.

4 On the war and society approach, see Howard, *War in European History*; Barkawi, *Globalization and War*.

5 Similar themes feature prominently in Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*; Clapham, *Africa*; Reno, *Warlord Politics* and *Warfare in Independent Africa*; Bates, *When Things Fell Apart*.

6 Zeleza, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

7 *Human Security Report 2005*, p. 4.

8 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003*, p. 2.

9 *Human Security Brief 2007*, p. 26.

10 Harbom and Wallensteen, ‘Patterns’, p. 71. The thirteen were Algeria, Angola, Burundi, the DRC, Republic of Congo, Eritrea–Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

11 *Human Security Brief 2007* and *Human Security Report 2012*.

12 Harbom and Wallensteen, ‘Patterns’, p. 70.

13 The Uppsala Conflict Data Programme defines non-state armed conflicts as those where organized, collective armed violence occurs but where a

recognized government is not one of the parties. Harbom and Wallensteen, ‘Patterns’, pp. 75–6.

14 Clausewitz, *On War*.

15 That said, there are some good reasons why Clausewitzean modes of thinking remain relevant even if some of his historical categories do not. See Smith, *The Utility of Force*; Stone, ‘Clausewitz's trinity’; Strachan and Herberg-Rothe, *Clausewitz*; Kaldor, ‘Inconclusive wars’.

16 See Williams, *Enhancing US Support*, p. 6.

17 See Sambanis, ‘What is civil war?’ and Geneva Declaration Secretariat, *Global Burden*.

18 For example, Goldstone et al., ‘A global forecasting model’ (2010).

19 The classic discussion of war as a level-of-analysis problem which sees international anarchy as the principal source of war recurrence is Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*. For a view of warfare as the human version of struggles to survive and reproduce in conditions of scarcity, see Gat, *War in Human Civilization*.

20 Brown, ‘The causes and regional dimensions’, p. 574.

21 Suganami, ‘Explaining war’, p. 309.

22 Suganami, ‘Stories’, pp. 410–11.

23 See, for example, ibid.

24 Zeleza, ‘Introduction’, p. 1.

25 For example, Brown, ‘The causes and regional dimensions’, pp. 582–3.

26 Commission for Africa, *Our Common Interest*. See also Elbadawi and Sambanis, ‘Why’, p. 253.

27 Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Witness to Truth*, para. 11.

28 Jackson, *Quasi-States*.

29 See Braathen, Bøås and Sæther, *Ethnicity Kills?*.

30 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 5.

31 See Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the economic causes’; Collier, ‘Rebellion’; Collier and Hoeffler, ‘Greed and grievance in civil war’.

32 For critiques of this approach, see Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, chap. 2; Herbst, ‘Economic incentives’; Berdal, ‘Beyond greed and grievance’.

33 Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, ‘Beyond greed and grievance’.

34 See Sobek, *The Causes of War*, p. 6.

35 Johnson, ‘Darfur’, p. 93.

36 de Waal, ‘Sudan’.

37 Ibid., p. 37.

38 See Nicholas Kristof's articles ‘Ethnic cleansing, again’, *New York Times*, 24 March 2004; ‘Will we say “never again” yet again?’, *New York Times*, 27 March 2004; ‘Cruel choices’, *New York Times*, 14 April 2004; and Samantha Power, ‘Dying in Darfur’, *New Yorker*, 30 August 2004.

39 See, for example, ICG, *Darfur Rising*, pp. 8–9; Prunier, *Darfur*, p. 93.

40 See El Din, ‘Islam’, pp. 92–112; Flint and de Waal, *Darfur*, pp. 17–18.

41 See, for example, Burr and Collins, *Darfur*; Tubiana, *The Chad–Sudan Proxy War*.

42 Faris, ‘The real roots’, p. 69.

43 The Atlantic Council of the United States Global Leadership Series, ‘Remarks by Jan Eliasson, UN Special Envoy to Darfur’ (Washington, DC: 16 May 2007), p. 5, at www.acus.org/files/070516-Jan%20Eliasson%20-%20transcript.pdf.

44 Ban Ki-moon, ‘A climate culprit in Darfur’, *Washington Post*, 16 June 2007.

Part I
Contexts

Chapter One
Counting Africa's Conflicts (and Their Casualties)

‘Wars’, the Political Instability Task Force concluded ‘can not be measured exactly but only estimated.’[1] This is certainly true in Africa where information about the continent's conflicts is notoriously incomplete, unreliable and usually part of somebody's propaganda machine. As I discuss below, most of the attempts to construct datasets about organized violence in Africa have been based on information produced by governments, international organizations, journalists and NGOs. This is not without its problems.

There are, of course, basic obstacles to gathering data about Africa's war zones related to personal safety and security. But there are other, more fundamental, problems. First, the problem of *definition*: What, exactly, should analysts be counting – wars, major/minor armed conflicts, battles, massacres, banditry, riots, demonstrations, or all of these things? In sum, what types of events should be taken as indicators of armed conflict, as opposed to, say, criminal acts and individual homicides? Second, the problem of *collection*: Where should the data come from – journalists, governments, international organizations, NGOs, scholars, or all of them? Media outlets are unable to report on all relevant conflict events; NGOs and international organizations are not uniformly present across the continent; and most African governments have clearly lacked stable and effective bureaucracies charged with collecting relevant information. The third problem is *interpretation*. Whose interpretation of the data should be considered authoritative? Reporting and analysis of Africa's armed conflicts and relevant events has always produced competing narratives and casualty estimates. Such divergence creates a political minefield for analysts attempting to construct a comprehensive and accurate picture of armed conflicts across the continent. As one recent analysis put it, ‘To obtain reliable figures on who died, where, and when, researchers must not only overcome the practical problems of tallying the dead and injured during

wars and rebellions, but also circumvent rival parties' attempts to distort those numbers.'[2]

As I discuss below, there is no way around these fundamental problems. But they should be acknowledged and the foundations on which the data is based made transparent. This is particularly important given that many of the violent conflicts taking place in contemporary Africa occur on the margins of, or even outside, the African society of states. Consequently, state-centric forms of data collection are increasingly unhelpful. It is dynamics within the 'non-state world' and the interaction between states and non-state social forces that provide the most useful insights for understanding current patterns of warfare in Africa.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the patterns of armed conflict in Africa, thereby providing a broader historical context of warfare in postcolonial Africa in which to situate the analysis that follows in parts II and III of the book.[3] In particular, I examine how analysts have answered such basic questions as: What counts as an armed conflict – and hence what is the universe of relevant cases? Where does Africa fit into global conflict trends? And, how many people have died as a result of Africa's wars?

I do this by approaching questions about the statistics of Africa's conflicts from two directions. First, at a macro level, I compare three frameworks and datasets that have catalogued the number, type and intensity of Africa's armed conflicts. Second, at a more micro level, I look at the problems and politics of trying to develop rigorous and comprehensive information about Africa's wars by examining attempts to count the casualties of the war in Darfur, Sudan (2003–present) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), (1998–present). For different reasons, both these wars attracted unprecedented efforts to measure the human death toll but in neither case did clear answers emerge. The basic argument can be summarized quickly. At the macro level, not only is there no consensus over how to count Africa's armed conflicts but analysts ignored the non-state dimensions of organized violence for too long. At the micro end of the spectrum, all statistics are political and unreliable and core assumptions about levels of baseline mortality can have drastic effects on the conclusions reached.

The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the turn towards using geographic information system (GIS) technologies to catalogue patterns of armed conflict in Africa. This geo-spatial turn has generated lots of interesting new data but, predictably, it has not overcome the fundamental problems of definition, collection and interpretation that bedevil this area of study.

Counting Armed Conflicts in Africa

How many armed conflicts has Africa witnessed in the post-Cold War period? There is no simple and uncontested answer. Nevertheless, a good place to start is with the answers provided by three efforts to compile comprehensive data: the Political Instability Task Force (PITF), Monty Marshall's 2006 study for the UK government, and the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP).

The Political Instability Task Force Version

The PITF was originally formed in 1994 at the request of senior policymakers in the US government. It comprised a core group of ten to fifteen leading scholars from various US universities. Its remit was ‘to assess and explain the vulnerability of states around the world to political instability and state failure’. The Task Force's aspiration was to ‘develop statistical models that can accurately assess countries' prospects for major political change and can identify key risk factors of interest to US policymakers’. Regardless of the predictive quality of its subsequent models, the PITF's dataset provides a useful starting point for studying the broad contours of armed conflict in postcolonial Africa. It catalogues a variety of ‘state failure events’ which encompass a range of severe political conflicts and regime crises, specifically, revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, adverse regime changes, and genocides and politicides.[4]

The Task Force's concept of ‘complex events’ such as those in Sudan between 1983 and the present, Chad between 1965 and 1994, and Central African Republic from 2003 to present is particularly useful in the African context. These complex events are understood as being ‘made up of two or more temporally linked wars and crises. If events overlap or if five years or less separate the end of one event and the onset of the next distinct event,

they are combined into complex events (subsequent flare-ups of events are considered continuations).'[5] This concept is useful precisely because Africa's wars rarely have neat beginnings or endings. As David Keen observed, in Africa as elsewhere, 'peacetime' and 'wartime' share some important characteristics, not least the existence of significant numbers of violent deaths, and the willingness to use violence to accumulate resources and repress opponents.[6]

Using the PITF data, figure 1.1 demonstrates that during the period 1955–2014, approximately 40 per cent of all state failure events globally took place in Africa.[7] Of the four categories of PITF state failure events, most of these were either ethnic or revolutionary wars; although especially during the 1990s and early 2000s adverse regime changes account for a significant percentage (see figure 1.2).

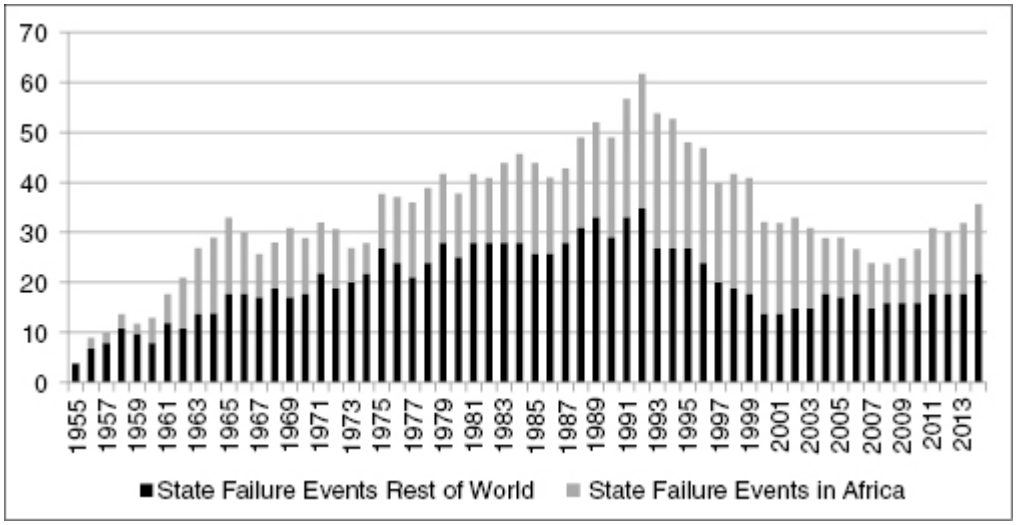

Figure 1.1 *Number of state failure events, 1955–2014*

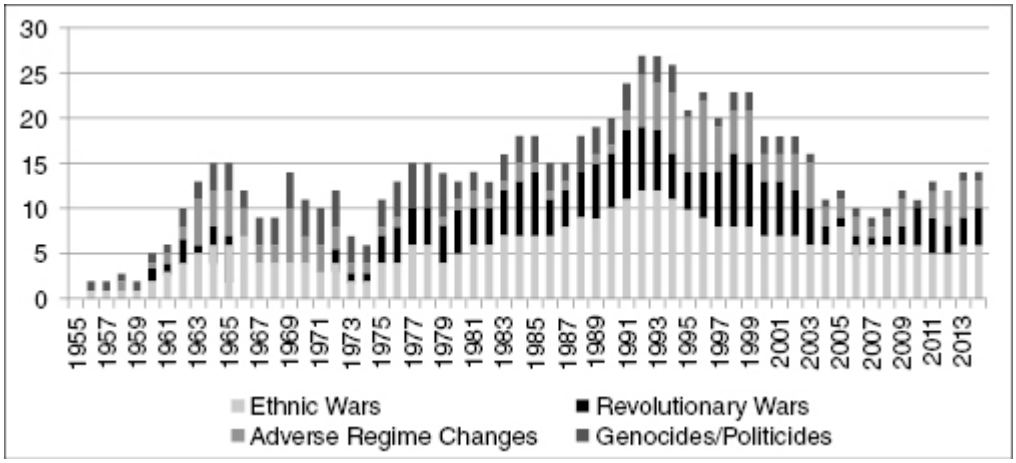

Figure 1.2 *State failure events in Africa, 1955–2014*

Given my focus on armed conflicts, it seems appropriate to discard the PITF category of adverse regime changes and focus instead on those events that are defined by a degree of organized violence: ethnic wars, revolutionary wars, as well as genocides and politicides. At its peak, in 2000, Africa accounted for 67 per cent of revolutionary wars worldwide (see figure 1.3). Moreover, between 1997 and 2003 the continent was consistently home to at least 50 per cent of the world's revolutionary wars. Since 2004, however, Africa's share of the world's revolutionary wars has dropped, accounting for no more than 40 per cent. A similar picture is evident in relation to ethnic wars. At its peak in 2001 and 2002, Africa accounted for 47 per cent of the world's ethnic wars and from 1990 to 2014

the continent consistently endured more than 30 per cent of the world's ethnic wars (see figure 1.4). The picture is even starker in relation to genocides and politicides (see figure 1.5). For long periods (1996–7 and 2000–8), Africa was the only continent to experience such forms of violence, and between 1993 and 2014 the continent never suffered less than 50 per cent of the world's genocides and politicides.

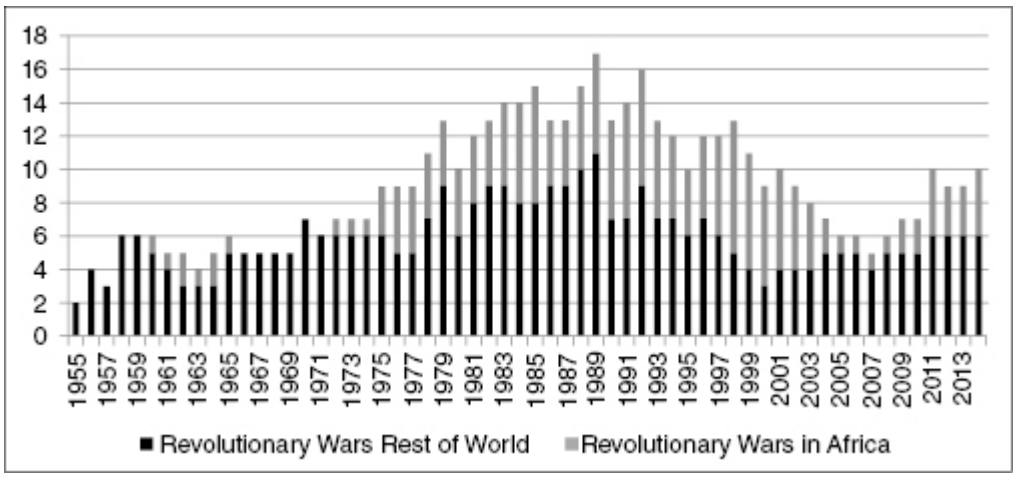

Figure 1.3 *Number of revolutionary wars, 1955–2014*

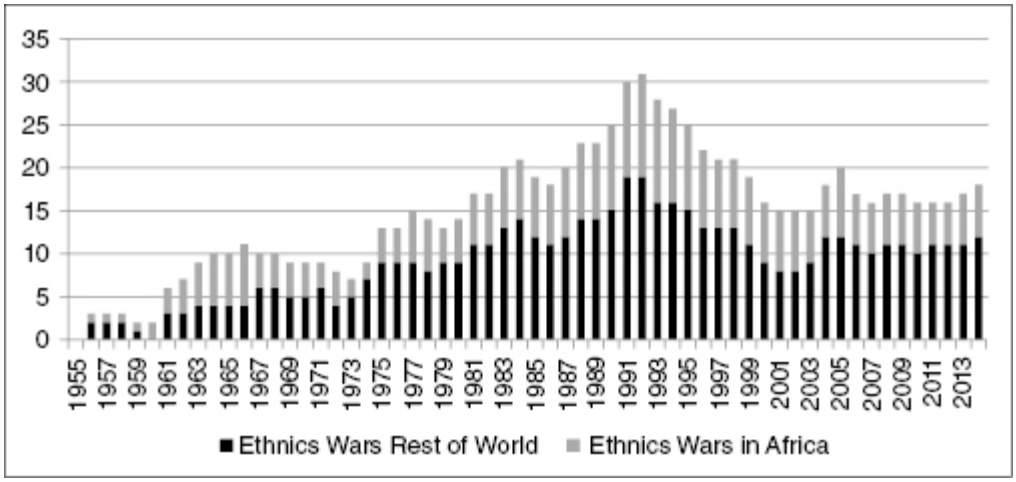

Figure 1.4 *Number of ethnic wars, 1955–2014*

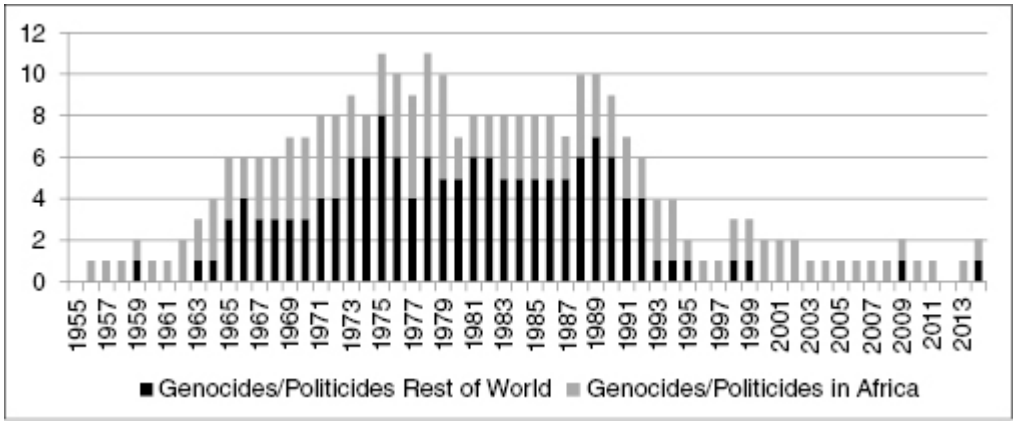

Figure 1.5 *Number of genocides and politicides, 1955–2014*

Monty Marshall's Version

In 2006, one of the members of the PITF conducted a study for the UK government's Africa Conflict Prevention Pool that focused specifically on the incidence and magnitude of armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa.[8] Interestingly, Marshall departed from the PITF framework by identifying eighty-five episodes of major armed conflict in sub-Saharan Africa between 1963 and 2004. These were defined as ‘episodes of organized and sustained, collective violence during the course of which there occur at least 500 direct, battle-related deaths at a rate in excess of 100 deaths per annum’. Episodes include wars of independence, interstate warfare, civil warfare and political mass murder (all of which involve direct action by state authorities), and inter-communal violence (in which the state is not directly involved). It should be noted that not only was Marshall's dataset restricted to sub-Saharan Africa, but it focused on ‘major armed conflicts’ rather than wars and hence operated with a lower threshold of battle-related deaths (at least 500) compared to the PITF dataset (which required at least 1,000 for a violent episode to count as an ethnic or revolutionary war). Marshall's calculations provide the following distribution of major armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa between 1963 and 2004 (see figure 1.6).

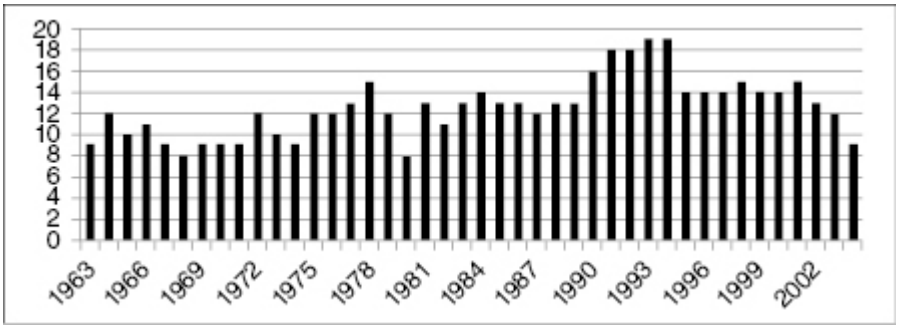

Figure 1.6 *Number of major armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa, 1963–2004*

The Uppsala Conflict Data Programme Version

A third source of relevant data is the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP).[9] Particularly since the end of the Cold War, the UCDP has developed different types of data as more and more questions have arisen about how to count and classify episodes of organized violence and how to think about conflict management. It is organized around two types of armed conflict: state-based (where one of the warring parties is a government) and non-state (where organized, collective armed violence occurs but where a recognized government is not one of the parties). The UCDP defines an armed conflict as a contested incompatibility that concerns government or territory or both, where the use of armed force between two parties results in at least twenty-five battle-related deaths. Wars involve at least 1,000 battle-related deaths in a calendar year.

Using UCDP data, post-Cold War Africa experienced approximately one-third of the world's state-based armed conflicts (see figure 1.7).[10] Calculated by the number of states, Africa represents fifty-four out of the now 193 UN members, or 28 per cent. Calculated with reference to human population, in the early 1990s the continent had approximately 930 million out of the global total of 6,600 million, or 14 per cent. By either measure, Africa has suffered more than its fair share of armed conflicts. In absolute terms, Africa often endured more than a dozen state-based armed conflicts, almost all of which have been of the intra-state or internationalized intra-state variety.

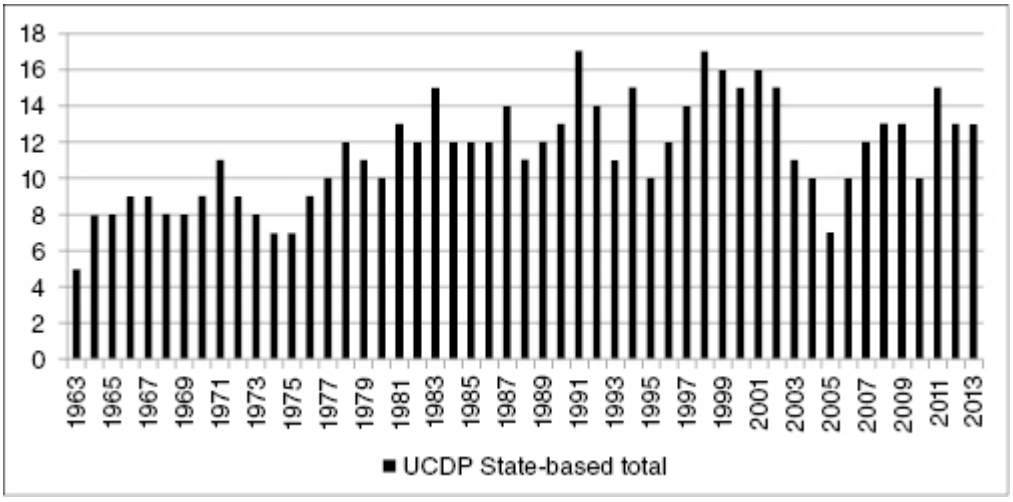

Figure 1.7 *Number of state-based armed conflicts in Africa, 1963–2013*

Comparing these three datasets is difficult in one sense because each of them operates with a different definition of a relevant armed conflict. Nevertheless, it is worth undertaking a comparison because all of them set out to measure episodes of organized violence in Africa and elsewhere. Figure 1.8 compares the totals of the UCPD, Monty Marshall, and the combined total of the PITF entries for ethnic and revolutionary wars (i.e. excluding genocides/politicides and adverse regime changes) between 1990 and 2014. This reveals several conclusions. First, they diverge over the exact numbers of armed conflicts in Africa but they seem to converge on broad trends, at least until 2005. Most notably, all of them identify a reduction in the number of armed conflicts from the peak period of the early 1990s. However, this is more pronounced in the Marshall and PITF datasets than the UCDP one.

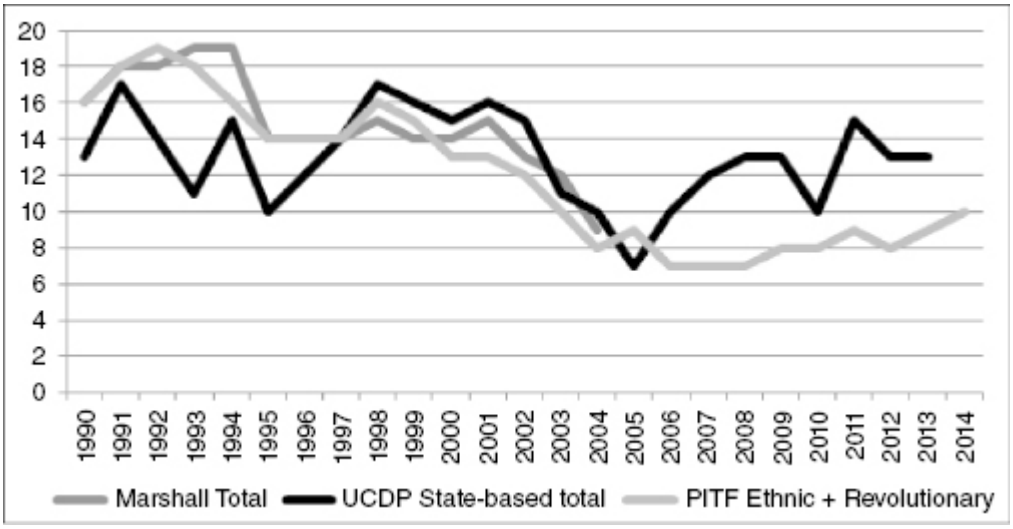

Figure 1.8 *Number of armed conflicts in Africa compared, 1990–2014*

On occasion (i.e. 1991, 1996 and 1997), the three datasets come very close to convergence. At other times, however, there are serious discrepancies of up to eight armed conflicts (e.g. 1993, 2008 and 2011). In 1992, for example, table 1.1 shows the discrepancies for particular conflicts across the datasets. It is particularly difficult to understand why the UCDP list is smaller than the other two datasets given its much smaller threshold for inclusion (25 battle-related deaths).

Table 1.1 List of armed conflicts in Africa for 1992

PITF (ethnic + revolutionary)	Monty Marshall	UCDP
Algeria	X	Algeria
Angola (UNITA)	Angola (UNITA)	Angola (UNITA)
X	Angola (Cabinda)	X
Burundi	X	Burundi
Chad	Chad	Chad
Djibouti	Djibouti	Djibouti
Egypt	X	X
X	X	Ethiopia
Kenya	Kenya	X
Liberia	Liberia	X
Mali	Mali	X
Mozambique	Mozambique	Mozambique
X	Niger	Niger
X	Nigeria	X
Rwanda	Rwanda	Rwanda
Senegal	Senegal	Senegal
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
Somalia	Somalia	Somalia
South Africa	South Africa	X
Sudan	Sudan	Sudan
Uganda	Uganda	Uganda
Zaire	Zaire	X

While many factors may help explain these discrepancies, several issues stand out as noteworthy. First, given the low threshold of 25 or more battle-related deaths used by the UCDP, it is surprising that from 1990 to 1996 its data is lower than both the other approaches. In relation to the Marshall study, on the one hand, we should expect his data to produce slightly lower

figures because it is restricted to sub-Saharan Africa (i.e. excluding North Africa) rather than the entire continent. On the other hand, we would expect his data to include more episodes of armed conflicts than the PITF approach because his threshold of battle deaths for ‘major armed conflicts’ is half as much as the PITF's threshold for inclusion as an ethnic or revolutionary war (500 compared to 1,000). It would appear that the latter factor is more significant because Marshall's figures are often higher than those of the original PITF approach.

In sum, these datasets show that even on such a basic macro-level issue as ‘how many armed conflicts are ongoing in Africa?’ the conclusions that follow are built on contested foundations. Indeed, it might be more accurate not to talk of foundations for knowledge but instead recognize that our analysis is at best anchored to certain (contestable and potentially shifting) definitions and assumptions. That said, these approaches seem to point towards similar broad trends in the number and type of armed conflicts in Africa after the Cold War.

A further limitation of these datasets is the lack of precise information about conflicts ‘whose distinguishing feature is that none of the warring parties is a government’.[11] This is a problem because it has long been clear that non-state actors have played important roles in postcolonial Africa, including in relation to armed conflict.[12] Yet it was only in 2004 that the UCDP started to collect systematic data on what it called non-state armed conflicts.

The UCDP has now collected data on non-state armed conflicts in Africa between 1989 and 2013.[13] The results are very instructive. During this period, the UCDP counted 520 non-state armed conflict dyads in twenty-eight different states. Nigeria and Somalia had the most non-state armed conflicts with eighty-nine and eighty-seven, respectively. Overall, 406 of these conflicts occurred in just six countries (Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and DRC). The UCDP's best estimate for the combined total of fatalities for the 520 conflicts is 82,431. The top five countries for non-state conflict fatalities were: Sudan (17,991), Nigeria (15,329), DRC (12,173), Somalia (10,847) and Ethiopia (6,538). These five states alone thus account for 76.3 per cent of the continental total. These figures mean that on average, each of these non-state armed conflicts killed 159 people. Hence with reference to the UCDP categories of armed conflict intensity,

the vast majority of them count as minor or intermediate armed conflicts. Nevertheless, eighteen of them would register as wars with over 1,000 fatalities. These took place in eight states (DRC ×3, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria ×4, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan ×6) with the two most deadly being the conflict between the Banyarwanda and Hunde, Nyanga in DRC during 1993 (which killed 3,051 people) and the conflict between the SPLM/A and the South Sudan Defence Forces in Sudan between 1991 and 1993 (which killed 2,732 people).

These figures should significantly alter the way analysts think about organized violence in Africa.

Counting the Casualties

How analysts count the casualties of war is important for both scholarly and political reasons. Intellectually, it is necessary to have at least a rough idea of the magnitude of the conflict and the numbers of casualties involved. Politically, efforts to count the dead and dying are important for attracting international attention, humanitarian assistance, and for debates about possible intervention. But inevitably any estimates become entangled in the propaganda wars of the belligerents (and other groups). As Douglas Johnson noted in the case of Sudan, when it comes to producing casualty estimates, the point of the exercise is often to attract attention to one's cause.[14] Without exception, the process of estimating the casualties in Africa's armed conflicts is incredibly daunting and potentially very dangerous work. Not only do analysts usually lack comprehensive and reliable demographic data (such as census information, and birth and mortality rates) about life before the armed conflict started, they will be extremely hard pressed to gather it after the outbreak of hostilities, especially in the areas most prone to violence.

The most recent war in Darfur, Sudan (2003–) provides a good illustration of the ways in which casualty estimates emerge, develop, become contested, subsequently fluctuate and then get recycled across various media outlets and political organizations. Table 1.2 sets out a (far from comprehensive) chronological overview of when different organizations and individuals produced estimates of the death toll in Darfur's war. It highlights not only the contested and rather haphazard nature of the process,

but also how the casualty estimates are often used explicitly to justify a particular way of framing the situation and/or the appropriate response(s). In addition, most organizations did not take the time to distinguish between total deaths and excess deaths, with most using the former category. This chronology also shows how, by early 2010, estimates cohered around the figure of approximately 300,000 excess deaths. And yet the war in Darfur continues to this day; well after the December 2008 cut-off date used for that estimate.

Table 1.2 Measuring the death toll in Darfur

Source: Coalition for International Justice (CIJ), *Chronology of Reporting on Events Concerning the Conflict in Darfur, Sudan* (CIJ, February 2006), available at: http://sudan.uconn.edu/CIJ_Complete_Darfur_Chronology.pdf.

30 October 2003	Andrew Natsios, USAID Administrator, says that between February and October 2003 the war has left 7,000 people dead.
22 March 2004	The UN estimates the death toll at 10,000.
23 April 2004	Richard Williamson, US Ambassador to the UN, suggests the death toll is 30,000.
26 April 2004	Andrew Natsios says reports of 30,000 killed cannot be confirmed.
13 May 2004	Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail says only 1,000 have been killed.
4 July 2004	The *Washington Post* estimates that 30,000 people have been killed in the war.
23 July 2004	US Congressman Donald Payne says that 30,000 people have been killed.
23 July 2004	Jan Egeland, UN Head of Emergency Relief Coordination, says the death toll could be as high as 50,000.
9 August 2004	The UN estimates 30,000 to 50,000 dead. Sudanese Foreign Minister Ismail denies this, saying the number is 5,000, including 500 policemen.
2 September 2004	The International Rescue Committee estimates that there could be 200,000 to 300,000 deaths if the aid and security situation in Darfur does not improve.
13–14 September 2004	The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that at least 50,000 people have been killed in attacks since February 2003.
1 October 2004	The WHO estimates that 6,000 to 10,000 civilians in Darfur are dying each month from violence and disease.

6–7 October 2004	While UK Prime Minister Tony Blair visits Khartoum, news reports suggest that more than 50,000 have been killed in Darfur since February 2003.
15 October 2004	David Nabarro, the top WHO crisis official, estimates 70,000 people have died in Darfur displacement camps since March 2004 from malnutrition and disease.
17 October 2004	Mohammed Yusuf Ibrahim, Sudanese State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, disputes the WHO claim and says that no more than 7,000 people have died.
20 January 2005	The Coalition for International Justice says that in a survey conducted for the US State Department 61 per cent of the 1,136 refugees surveyed had witnessed a family member killed. Eric Reeves, a professor of English language and literature at Smith College (USA), argues that if this ratio holds for all of Darfur's two million displaced people then 200,000 would be killed.
21 January 2005	The US Government says more than 70,000 people have been killed.
9 March 2005	Jan Egeland says that many more people than the 70,000 reported last year have died in Darfur, largely from preventable causes like pneumonia and diarrhoea. Egeland says that the 70,000 figure was released when there were one million internally displaced in Darfur, but that number has since doubled. He is quoted as saying: ‘Is it three times that? Is it five times that? I don't know, but it's several times the number of 70,000 that have died altogether.’
11 March 2005	Eric Reeves releases his twelfth assessment of mortality in Darfur and claims 380,000 dead.
16 March 2005	The UN revises its death toll estimate to 180,000 dead.
30 March 2005	The UK House of Commons International Development Committee estimates the death toll in Darfur to be ‘somewhere around 300,000’.

21 April 2005	The Coalition for International Justice estimates the death toll in Darfur could be as high as 400,000 (140,000 directly from violence and 250,000 deaths from disease, starvation and other causes).
November 2006	After reporting at the time that the total deaths in Darfur from February 2003 to January 2005 were between 98,000 and 181,000, the US State Department concluded later that between 63,000 and 146,000 excess deaths had occurred.15
January 2010	An independent study based on a review of 63 different mortality surveys concluded that for the period between March 2003 and December 2008 a reasonable estimate of the total deaths was 486,121 and 298,271 excess deaths. Of these, 62,305 (or less than 20 per cent) were said to be violence related.16

Arguably, the most sophisticated framework and dataset for classifying and estimating the human costs of war has been compiled by Bethany Ann Lacina and Nils Peter Gleditsch (see figure 1.9). It covers the period 1989–2014 and has been designed to be compatible with the information compiled by the UCDP. Their dataset distinguishes between battle (or combat) deaths and non-battle deaths. Battle deaths are defined as ‘deaths resulting directly from violence inflicted through the use of armed force by a party to an armed conflict during contested combat.’[17] This measure tells us how many people were killed in military operations and provides the best measure of combat intensity. However, it does not account for all losses in any given armed conflict. To arrive at a more complete estimate of all war deaths, they suggest that analysts need to include one-sided violence; criminal violence; and non-violent deaths.

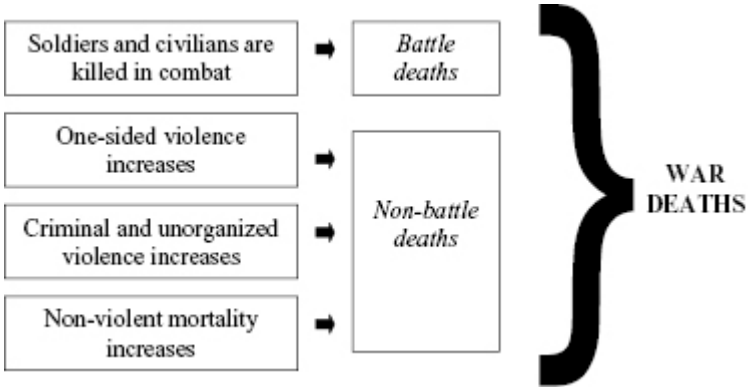

Figure 1.9 *Sources of war deaths*

Source: Lacina and Gleditsch, 'Monitoring Trends', p.149.

Between 1989 and 2014, this dataset recorded 419,078 battle deaths occurring in 335 distinct episodes in Africa (see figure 1.10).[18] Conflicts involving Ethiopians dominate these statistics. Not only does the interstate conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea during 1999 and 2000 account for 97,192 of these fatalities, but the two next largest totals were the 37,388 who died in fighting between the Ethiopian government and the EPRDF during 1989 and 1990, and the 30,633 who were killed in fighting between the Ethiopian government and the EPLF rebels during 1990. In more recent years, the larger battle death tolls came in the conflict in Somalia (initially between the Ethiopian government and the Transitional Federal Authorities against the Islamic Courts Union/*al-Shabaab*, 2007–12) and in Nigeria, as the government fought Boko Haram militants (2009–14).

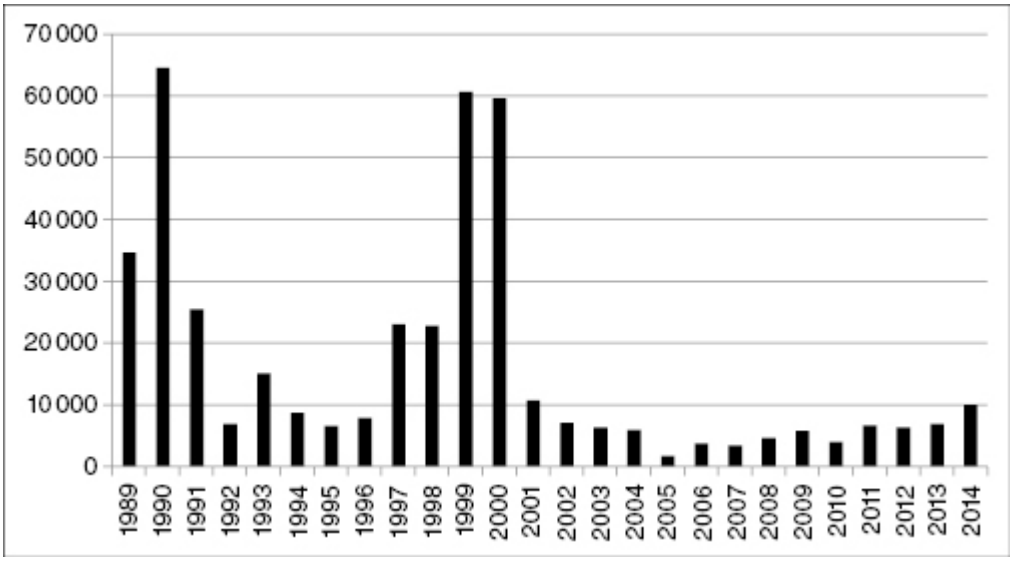

Figure 1.10 *Battle deaths in African conflicts, 1989–2014*

In Lacina and Gleditsch's framework, battle is conceived as an encounter involving at least two sides engaged in combat. One-sided violence, on the other hand, involves one side using violence and the other side suffering the consequences. It might include soldiers firing on unarmed protestors, summary executions of prisoners, or genocide. The UCDP define one-sided violence as ‘the use of armed force by the government of a state or by a formally organized group against civilians which results in at least 25 deaths. Extrajudicial killings in custody are excluded.’ The importance of including one-sided violence is highlighted by the UCDP's data on the phenomenon.

Between 1989 and 2013, it catalogued 662,430 civilians killed in such massacres in thirty-five different states, far more than any other region of the world.[19] These massacres were perpetrated by approximately 100 different actors (thirty governments and the rest non-state groups). The vast majority of these deaths occurred in the 1994 Rwanda genocide, which the UCDP lists as causing 500,000 one-sided deaths. The remaining 162,430 fatalities are depicted in figure 1.11, which shows the deaths by one-sided violence in Africa, excluding the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Just over half of these occurred in two states: 68,332 in the DRC and 18,880 in Sudan (excluding fatalities in South Sudan post-2011). There has clearly been a large reduction in the numbers of people massacred in Africa since the mid-1990s.

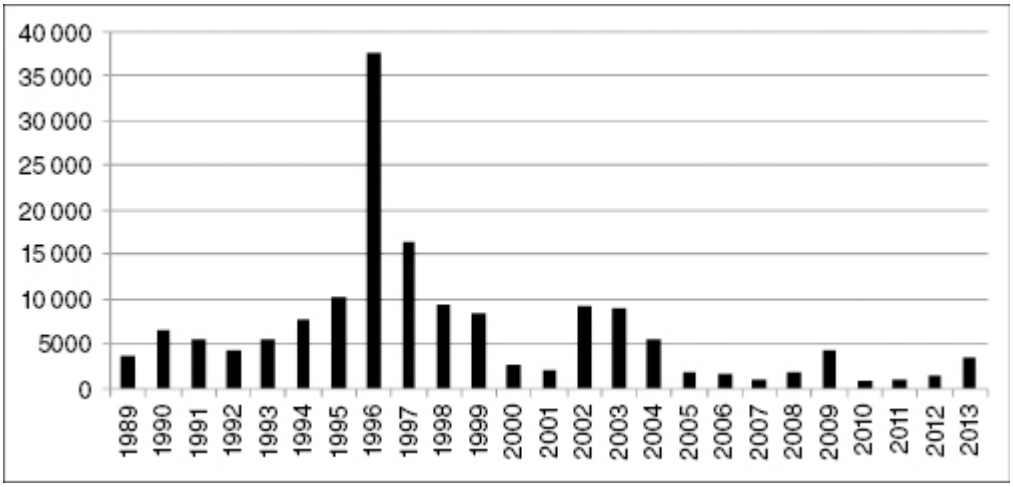

Figure 1.11 *One-sided violence fatalities in Africa, 1989–2013 (excluding 1994 Rwandan genocide)*

One important point made by Lacina and Gleditsch was their conclusion that non-battle causes of mortality, especially the effects of displacement, malnutrition and disease, account for more fatalities than battles. As table 1.3 demonstrates, this conclusion was borne out from their data on various conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa where battle deaths generally accounted for only a small proportion of overall war deaths. Since the factors causing non-battle mortality will continue long after combat has ceased, analysts face a problem of timeframe, i.e. deciding when the effects of a particular armed conflict can be said to have ended. Lacina and Gleditsch conclude that these causes of non-battle mortality are particularly prevalent when warfare destroys a state's economy, infrastructure (especially health and human services), and public safety systems. This makes them especially pertinent when analysing many of Africa's armed conflicts, which often take place against a backdrop of state weakness and where there are generally low levels of infrastructure and healthcare to start with. Given the relative importance of the causes of non-battle mortality, it is demographers, public health specialists and epidemiologists that probably hold the key to calculating the human costs of armed conflicts.[20] As Lacina and Gleditsch note, ‘The tools of scientific studies of population have already been used to provide data on a few recent conflicts that is of a precision and clarity far beyond that offered by other sources.’[21]

Table 1.3 Deaths in selected African conflicts

Country	Years	Estimates of total war deaths	Battle deaths	Percentage of battle dead
Sudan (Anya Nya rebellion)	1963–73	250,000–750,000	20,000	3–8
Nigeria (Biafra rebellion)	1967–70	0.5–2 million	75,000	4–15
Angola	1975–2002	1.5 million	160,475	11
Ethiopia (excluding Eritrean insurgency)	1976–91	1–2 million	16,000	+ 42
Mozambique	1976–92	0.5–1 million	145,400	15–29
Somalia	1981–96	250,000–350,000 (to mid-1990s)	66,750	19–27
Sudan	1983–2002	2 million	55,500	3
Liberia	1989–96	150,000–200,000	23,500	12–16
Democratic Republic of Congo	1998–2001	2.5 million	145,000	6

Source: Lacina and Gleditsch, 'Monitoring Trends', p. 159

The problems and politics of counting the casualties of war are exemplified in the case of the DRC since 1998. This is a particularly important case study, not only because it is commonly thought to be the most deadly of Africa's wars, but also because it is one of the few cases where sophisticated epidemiological studies have been conducted and then exposed to rigorous critique. Unfortunately, most armed conflicts in Africa do not attract such thorough attention. As noted in table 1.3, Lacina and Gleditsch estimated that the number of battle deaths in the DRC between 1998 and 2001 were 145,000, while the total number of war deaths for the same period was 2.5 million. These figures are based on the surveys undertaken by the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Between 2000 and 2007, the IRC published five reports of mortality rates in the DRC. Initially these focused on the eastern part of the country but the last three were nationwide in coverage. The IRC surveys represent arguably the most sophisticated and certainly the most sustained attempt to count the casualties of any of Africa's major armed conflicts. It is thus worth summarizing their claims and methods in some detail before outlining the problems raised by their critics.

Between 18 April and 27 May 2000, the IRC conducted a series of five mortality surveys in sites representing three of the DRC's five eastern provinces.[22] These sites had an overall population of 1.2 million people. The 1,011 households visited contained 7,339 living residents, who reported 606 deaths among their household members since 1 January 1999. Extrapolating from this data, the IRC concluded that 1.7 million ‘excess deaths’ had occurred in the previous 22 months, or approximately 77,000 per month, of which some 26,000 or 34 per cent were children younger than five years of age. In spite of this huge number, the IRC concluded that their ‘projection of 1.7 million deaths due to this war in eastern DRC is a very conservative estimate’ (p. 13). There were a number of reasons for this, including the fact that the surveys occurred in safer and more accessible areas than the average location in eastern DRC (p. 13). The IRC also noted that

> If entire families were killed, they would not have representatives to be included in our survey, resulting in a survivor bias in our surveys and an underestimate of mortality. Unfortunately, this is most likely to occur in the areas where the most violence occurred, and these locations are the most important in estimating the excess mortality.
>
> (p. 14)

Although the IRC did produce figures that distinguished between violent and non-violent deaths, it emphasized the point that violence and deaths from infectious disease are inseparably linked. Specifically, the researchers concluded that there was ‘an apparent association between the areas with the most violence-related mortality and the most “other” mortality. … In eastern DRC, war means disease’ (pp. 11, 15).

During March–April 2001 the IRC conducted a second set of five surveys in eastern DRC (defined as the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Orientale, Maniema and Katanga).[23] Members of a further 1,340 households were interviewed and the results were then combined with the five surveys conducted for the 2000 IRC report, and an earlier one from 1999. The eleven surveys encompassed a total of 18,450 people. Based on this data the IRC estimated that 2.5 million excess deaths had occurred during the 32-month period between August 1998 and March 2001 (this is above and beyond the approximately one million deaths that the IRC

estimated would have occurred in stable circumstances). Again, the overwhelming majority of deaths were related to disease and malnutrition. The number of violent deaths was estimated at 350,000.

The IRC undertook a third round of surveys – this time nationwide – between September and November 2002. In its subsequent report, published in April 2003, the organization drew several conclusions.[24] First, the mortality rate in eastern DRC had decreased from 5.4 deaths/1,000/month between August 1998 and April 2001 to 3.5 deaths/1,000/month for 2002. Without the war, the IRC estimated that the expected baseline mortality rate would have been 1.5 deaths/1,000/month. Second, the rate of death from violence in the east had ‘decreased dramatically’, that is, it was approximately one-tenth of that seen in previous years. Finally, the IRC estimated that ‘3.3 million excess deaths occurred between August 1998 and December 2002 in the five eastern provinces of the DRC’ (p. 13). Depending on assumptions made about the populations excluded from the survey, the IRC suggested that this estimate could range from 3 to 4.7 million people.

The IRC conducted its fourth survey between April and July 2004.[25] This was the IRC's second nationwide survey, although on this occasion approximately five million people were deemed inaccessible because of the security situation. In this effort, 19,500 households were visited (13,500 in eastern DRC and 6,000 in the west), accounting for a total population of 119,378 people. The heads of each household were asked about all deaths of household members during January 2003 to April 2004. Building on the previous IRC surveys, this one estimated that the total death toll from the war (August 1998 to April 2004) was 3.9 million (although reasonable estimates could range between 3.5 to 4.4 million). Again, most deaths were the result of ‘easily preventable and treatable illnesses rather than violence’ (p. 44). Not surprisingly, deaths due to violent injury were concentrated in the east. Men over 15 years of age were ‘at greater risk of being killed, constituting 71% of all violent deaths, although women (18%) and children younger than 15 years (10%) were not exempt’ (p. 48).

The IRC's fifth survey covered the period from January 2006 to April 2007 using a three-stage cluster sampling technique to survey 14,000 households (defined as a group of persons who eat and sleep together) in thirty-five health zones across all eleven provinces, i.e. a wider geographic coverage

than any of the previous IRC surveys.[26] Wherever possible, the questionnaire was conducted with a senior female member of the household. The IRC team concluded that 5.4 million excess deaths had occurred between August 1998 and April 2007 (by this stage the DRC's total population was estimated at 69.9 million people). An estimated 2.1 million of those deaths were thought to have occurred after the formal end of the war in 2002 and an estimated 4.6 million of them occurred in the five insecure eastern provinces. In addition, while the mortality levels in the east of the country had improved, at 2.6 deaths/1,000/month, this was still 85 per cent higher than the sub-Saharan average. The survey also concluded that only 0.4 per cent of the deaths in the DRC could be attributed directly to violence, most being caused by fever/malaria, diarrhoea, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, neonatal conditions and measles. The IRC's overall analysis of mortality trends is depicted in figure 1.12.

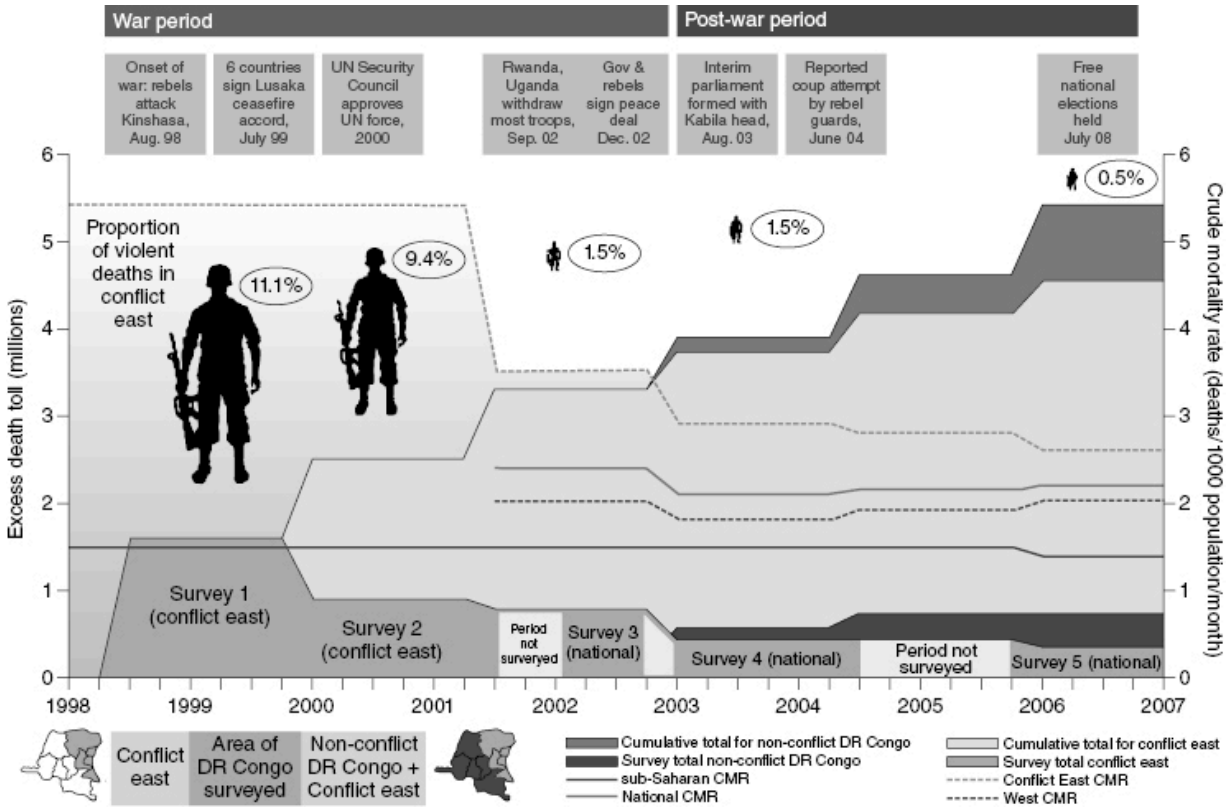

Figure 1.12 *International Rescue Committee estimates of trends in mortality and deaths from violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 1998–2007*

Source: IRC, *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (IRC, 2007), p. 13.

The IRC surveys have not been the only attempt to estimate casualties of the DRC's war, but to my knowledge they are the most concerted and sustained effort to date. In early 2010, however, the Human Security Report (HSR) published a critique of the IRC's findings on excess death estimates in the DRC.[27] The HSR team did not conduct their own surveys within the DRC but instead questioned the IRC's methodology, that is, they disputed how the IRC turned the data it collected in the surveys into an overall estimate of excess war deaths. Specifically, the HSR argued that two serious methodological problems rendered the IRC's estimate ‘far too high’. First, it argued that in the two surveys in 2000 and 2001 the ‘IRC's researchers did not select the areas to be surveyed in a way that ensured they were representative of the region as a whole’. These errors ‘led to large and unwarranted inflations of the excess death estimates’. More precisely, the HSR estimated that when these errors were corrected, the excess death estimates were 678,600 instead of the IRC's figure of 1.6 million.[28]

The second problem was that in the final three surveys (2002, 2004, 2007), the baseline mortality rate used by the IRC to determine the excess death rate was too low. Here, the HSR argued that it was wrong for the IRC to use the sub-Saharan average of 1.5 deaths/1,000/month as its baseline mortality rate for all but the very last survey (when the sub-Saharan average dropped to 1.4) because the DRC was not an average country in sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, the DRC was near the bottom of most cross-African measures of development before the war and so the HSR argued that it would be reasonable to expect that the baseline mortality rate for the country as a whole should be considerably higher than the sub-Saharan African average. The HSR therefore ran the same numbers using a higher baseline rate of 2.0 deaths per 1,000 instead of the IRC's rate of 1.5. When they did this, it 'sharply' reduced 'the estimated excess death toll attributable to the war throughout the entire period, with the decreases being greatest for the three most recent [IRC] surveys.'[29] Table 1.4 compares the different estimates of excess mortality figures generated by the IRC and the HSR calculations. It shows that changing the baseline rate from 1.5 to 2.0 deaths/1,000/month generates a total of excess deaths only one-third the size of the IRC estimate – 863,000 down from 2.83 million. Naturally, this critique generated a response from within the IRC and counter-arguments from the HSR.[30] My sense of the subsequent exchanges and debates is that the HSR critique has stood up to the scrutiny it has received.

Table 1.4 Excess deaths in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2001–2007: International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Human Security Report Project (HSRP) estimates

Period	IRC (best)	HSRP (best)	IRC (low)	HSRP (low)	IRC (high)	HSRP (high)
May 2001–December 2001	418,400	209,200	180,800	29,800	654,500	402,300
January 2002–December 2002	343,200	257,400	120,100	34,300	583,400	497,600
January 2003–April 2004	607,000	101,200	101,200	-404,700	1,112,900	607,000
May 2004–December 2005	735,000	136,600	419,300	-179,700	1,138,100	539,100
January 2006–April 2007	727,000	158,600	522,000	-31,800	1,050,000	371,300
May 2001–April 2007	**2,830,600**	**863,000**	**1,343,400**	**-552,100**	**4,538,900**	**2,417,300**

Source: Human Security Report 2009, p.42.

The Geo-Spatial Turn: From Conflicts to Events

The increasing use of geographic information system (GIS) technologies has facilitated new efforts to catalogue warfare in Africa. The two most prominent continent-wide datasets are the UCDP Geo-Referenced Event Dataset (GED) (see figure 1.13) and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project (ACLED) (see figure 1.14).[31] These databases use the same types of sources as those discussed above, and hence suffer from the same types of limitations and problems, but they utilize novel geo-spatial information to plot the location of conflict events. Specifically, these datasets have shifted the visualization of African data on organized violence from conflicts to specific events.

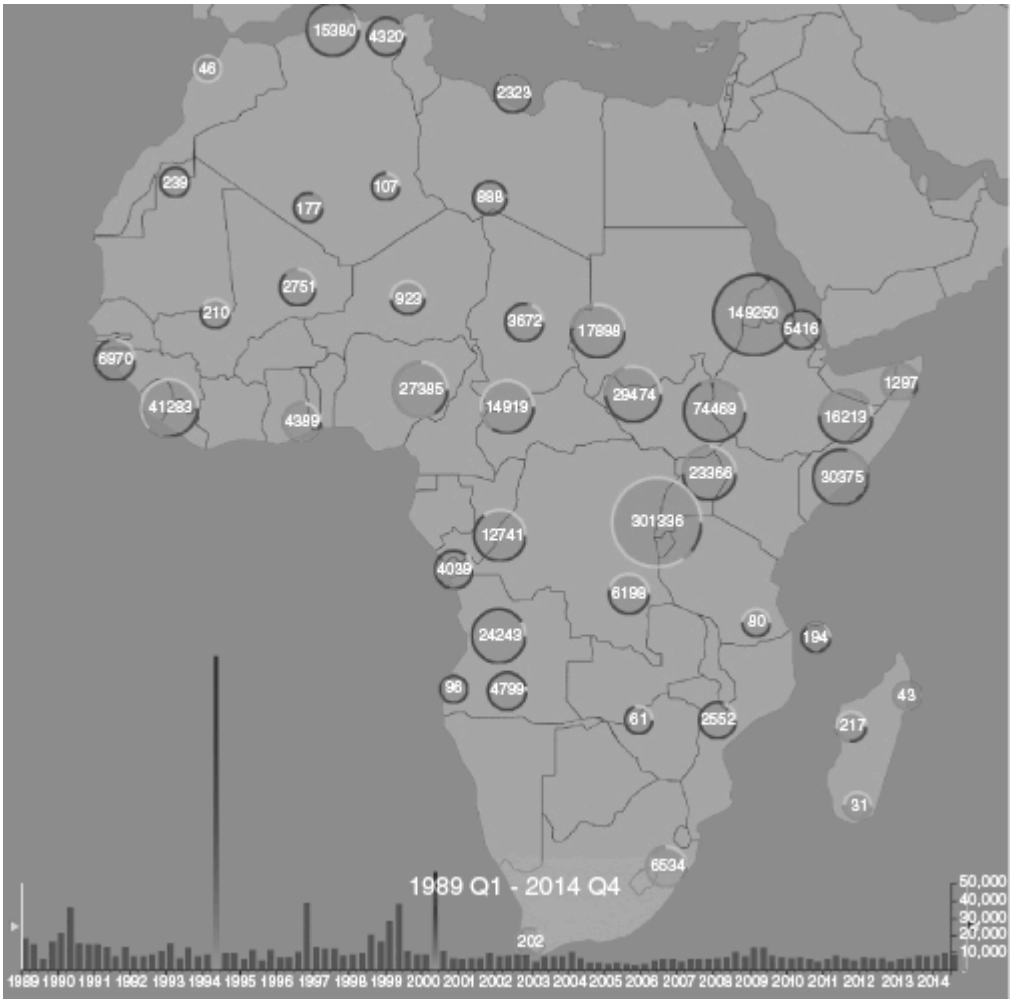

Figure 1.13 *UCDP-GED: state-based, non-state, and one-sided violence events in Africa, 1989–2013*

Source: http://www.ucdp.uu.se/ged/

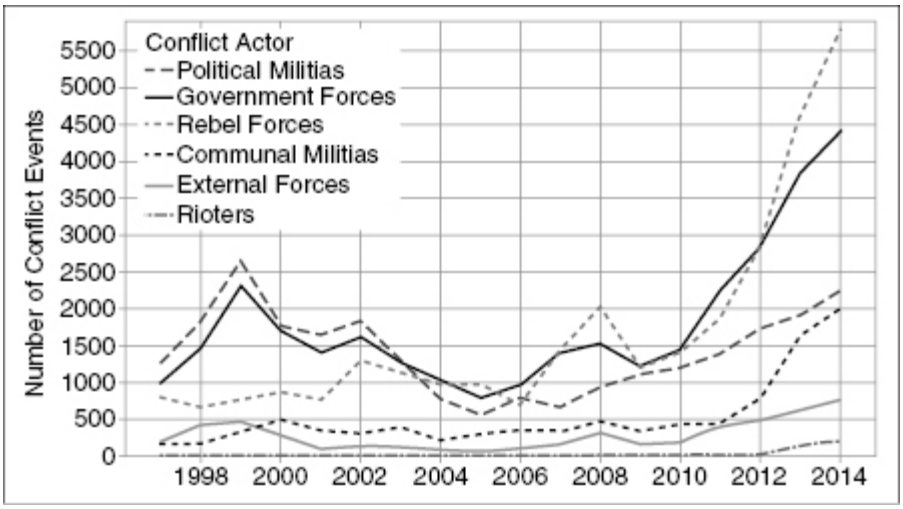

Figure 1.14 *Number of conflict-related events in Africa by actor, 1997–2014*

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) http://www.acleddata.com/

The new GIS data has also stimulated various scholarly publications on specific issues and places.[32] These efforts have reinforced the move away from state-centric analyses to instead emphasize the importance of sub-state and/or cross-state dynamics and regions as sites and drivers of organized violence.

A comparison of the two datasets conducted in April 2012 illustrates some of their most important distinguishing features.[33] First, they catalogue different types of events. Whereas UCDP-GED focuses only on governments or organized non-state actors, ACLED recognizes a wider range of actors including governments, rebels, political militias, ethnic group militias, political organizations and civilians, as well as 'unidentified conflict actors' – when events occur but the perpetrators cannot be identified. Second, whereas UCDP-GED focuses on acts of organized violence, ACLED includes a wider variety of conflict events. Specifically, UCDP-GED records state-based, non-state and one-sided forms of violence resulting in at least one direct fatality. ACLED, in contrast, includes battles, riots, protests, violence against civilians, remote violence (bombings, IEDs, mortars, etc.), and non-violent conflict events, such as transfer of territory, peace talks, rallies, base establishment and other relevant activities. Fatality numbers are not a criterion for inclusion in ACLED. Third, the datasets produce very different event totals. Whereas UCDP-GED registered 21,860 events in Africa between 1989 and 2010 (31 per cent state-based, 21 per cent non-state and 48 per cent one-sided violence), ACLED catalogued over 60,000 events between 1997 and 2012 (42 per cent battles, 38 per cent violence against civilians, 14 per cent riots and 6 per cent non-violent events). The ACLED figures, in particular, show a significant increase in all categories of conflict events in Africa since 2010, especially those involving state forces and political militias.

These general design differences produce sometimes highly divergent accounts of conflict in particular countries. In Nigeria, for example, UCDP-GED records less than one-tenth of the number of ACLED events (see table 1.5 and figure 1.15).[34]

Table 1.5 Nigerian political violence compared across ACLED and UCDP

Source: adapted from ACLED, 'Data Comparison 2: All Country Years and a Focus on Nigeria and South Africa' (2012), p. 2, available at: http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ACLED-Data-Comparison_Countries.pdf.

	ACLED (1997–June 2012)	**UCDP (1990–2010)**
Total number of events	3,379	318
Average event count/year	211	14
Average event count in overlap years (1997–2010)	185	22
Main agents	Political militias vs civilians (489)	Government of Nigeria vs civilians (49)
Main type of violence	Battles between armed groups (1,090)	Non-state (241)
Number of distinct actors	342	50 (dyads)

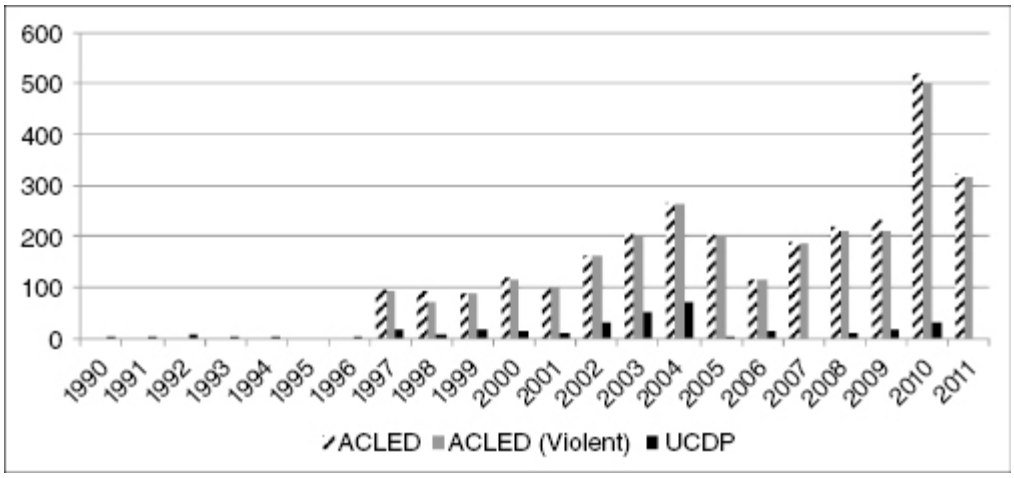

Figure 1.15 *Conflict events in Nigeria: ACLED and UCDP compared, 1990–2011*

Source: adapted from ACLED, 'Data Comparison 2: All Country Years and a Focus on Nigeria and South Africa' (2012), p. 5, available at: http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ACLED-Data-Comparison_Countries.pdf.

The different catalogues of conflict events produce variable estimates of direct fatalities. Consider the case of violent events occurring within

Nigeria that involve Boko Haram militants. Based on its four-stage data collection process, between 2010 and 2013, UCDP-GED's ‘best estimate’ was that 2,750 fatalities occurred in the armed conflict between the Nigerian government and Boko Haram.[35] UCDP-GED also estimated that Boko Haram killed an additional 1,479 civilians in one-sided violence between 2010 and 2013. This gives UCDP a total best estimate of 4,229 fatalities directly caused by Boko Haram's activities. In contrast, ACLED recorded 4,622 fatalities in violence inside Nigeria involving Boko Haram between 2010 and 2013.[36] ACLED acknowledges that these numbers are unverifiable and it relies on repetition of numbers from sources as well as default totals.[37] ACLED also acknowledges that ‘fatality data is particularly vulnerable to bias and inaccurate reporting’.[38] As a further point of comparison, it is instructive that the Council on Foreign Relations' Nigeria Security Tracker, a project that maps violence in Nigeria only, provides an even higher total of fatalities. The Security Tracker estimates that between May 2011 (when the Tracker started) and December 2013, fighting inside Nigeria involving Boko Haram caused 5,114 fatalities.[39] Finally, the Nigeria Watch database, based principally on ten Nigerian newspapers, found a total of 2,993 deaths (including 766 Boko Haram militants) from July 2009 to December 2012.[40]

Unsurprisingly, ACLED's broader definition of conflict events generally produces a higher estimate of violent episodes than the UCDP-GED. ACLED claims its methodological framework and use of news media and ‘NGO reports’ produces a more accurate picture of conflict than other datasets. In its words, ‘the result is the most comprehensive and wide-reaching source material presently used in disaggregated conflict event coding’.[41] This may be true. Nevertheless, ACLED's data has also been criticized for dramatically under-estimating the level of conflict in some parts of Africa.

One interesting case comes from DRC when ACLED data was compared against that collected by *Voix des Kivus*, a pilot ‘crowdseeding’ system that collected information via SMS from pre-identified local informants in randomly sampled locations in the province of South Kivu between 2009 and 2011. During the period 1 August 2009 to 31 December 2010, ACLED recorded twenty-seven conflict events in the South Kivu territories of

Kalehe, Walungu, Mwenga and Uvira. In contrast, *Voix des Kivus* reported 1,240 unique conflict events from just eighteen villages in those four territories during the same time period.[42] The analysts conducting this comparison also noted that the data from *Voix des Kivus* and ACLED painted very different pictures of the key perpetrators of violence against civilians: whereas ACLED suggested Congolese government soldiers (the FARDC) were responsible for less than 20 per cent of violence against civilians, the *Voix des Kivus* data said they carried out almost 50 per cent.

As this specific comparison from DRC suggests, even the most comprehensive general dataset of conflict events in Africa might severely under-estimate the prevalence of conflict. Moreover, it might also provide a misleading picture of the main perpetrators of violence. Both of these issues (intensity and responsibility) are fundamental to any understanding of warfare in Africa. Consequently, although the geo-spatial turn has generated lots of interesting new data, it has not resolved the fundamental problems of data-collection and interpretation that bedevil this area of study.

Conclusions

Counting armed conflicts and their casualties is never an exact science. But without such attempts we would have no idea of the potential universe of cases we are dealing with or any understanding of the varying intensity and scale of these different conflicts. While the first point is important for drawing comparative insights across the continent, the second is crucial for framing particular episodes and giving relative weight to particular wars. Even so, since statistics are always produced for someone and for some purpose, any such exercises will inevitably become entangled in the propaganda wars and blame games that swirl around all armed conflicts. Since some form of statistics are a necessary point of departure for any analysis, their limitations are best acknowledged and addressed explicitly. By looking at the trends identified in four sophisticated attempts to gather relevant data, this chapter has shown that whether measured in terms of its population or the number of its states, post-Cold War Africa has suffered more than its fair share of organized violence. It is this troubling fact that makes the search to explain and understand their causes so important.

After more than a decade of generally declining conflict numbers since the post-Cold War peak in 1991–2, there has been a significant rise in conflict data since 2010. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that Africa's armed conflicts accounted for a large proportion of the violent campaigns worldwide that targeted non-combatants (i.e. the PITF categories of genocide and politicide and the UCDP's notion of one-sided violence). This has recently been confirmed by ACLED data that shows a major spike in violence against civilians over the last few years (see figure 1.16). Some of the major reasons behind this uncomfortable fact are discussed in subsequent chapters of this book.

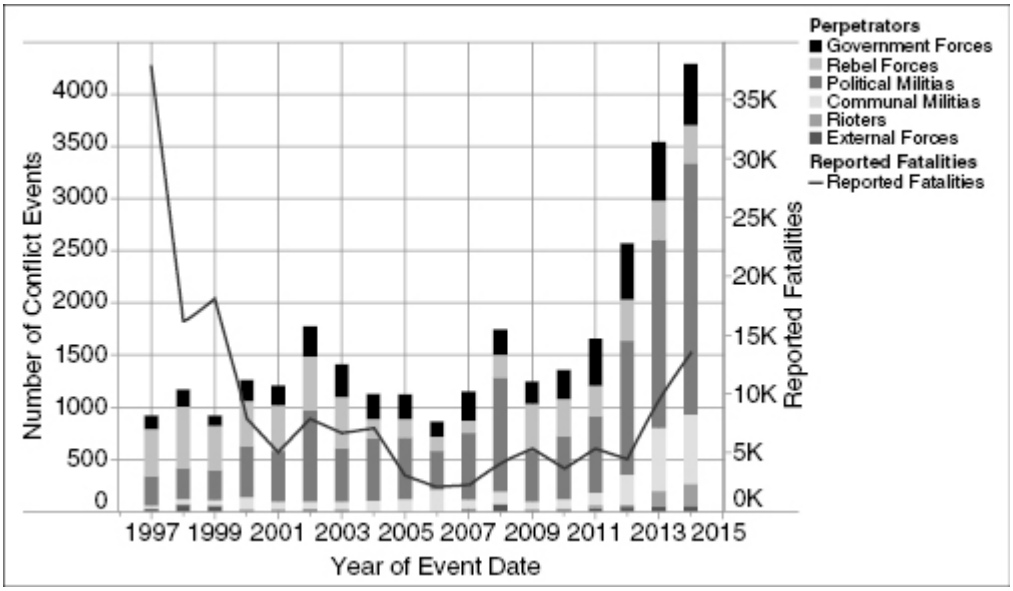

Figure 1.16 *Total violence against civilians in Africa by perpetrator, 1997–2014*

Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), available at: http://www.acleddata.com/violence-against-civilians-in-2014/

Perhaps the most striking point of all, however, is the large number of non-state armed conflicts in Africa. As the UCDP data from 1989–2013 demonstrate, any attempt to grapple with the causes of organized violence in post-Cold War Africa cannot focus solely on the activities of governments. Nor is the picture complete if we add only the ‘rebels’ who have traditionally fought these governments.[43] While understanding government–rebel dynamics is clearly an important part of the story on many occasions, we need to situate our understanding of organized violence

in an ontological framework that sees governments and rebels within the wider social, political and economic contexts in which they are embedded and which includes those forms of violence that take place outside Africa's state system. Chapter 2 aims to do this by placing socio-political complexes at the centre of its attempt to understand the political terrain on which Africa's armed conflicts were waged.

Major Datasets of Armed Conflict in Africa

The full list of armed conflicts and conflict events discussed in this chapter can be found on the relevant websites. These datasets are regularly updated so they should be consulted for the most recent details. The main datasets used here are:

The Political Instability Task Force (PITF)

- PITF State Failure Problem Set, 1955–2014: provides annual data on cases of ethnic war, revolutionary war, adverse regime change and genocide/politicide (also consolidated cases of political instability). It includes annual indicators of numbers of rebels, area affected and numbers of deaths. It is available at http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html
- PITF Worldwide Atrocities Dataset describes, in quantitative terms, the deliberate killing of non-combatant civilians in the context of a wider political conflict. The effective date of data in this dataset is 1 January 1995 to the present date. Data are updated monthly. It is available at http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/data.dir/atrocities.html

The Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP)

The UCDP (http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/) provides a range of datasets using its different categories of armed conflict. The main ones discussed in this book are:

- UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset: a conflict-year dataset with information on armed conflict where at least one party is the government of a state in the time period 1946–2014.

- UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset: a conflict-year and dyad-year dataset with information on the number of battle-related deaths in the conflicts from 1989 to 2014 that appear in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset.
- UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset: a conflict-year dataset with information on communal and organized armed conflict where none of the parties is the government of a state. The dataset has a temporal scope covering 1989 to 2013, and includes information on start and end dates, fatality estimates and locations.
- UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset: an actor-year dataset with information on intentional attacks on civilians by governments and formally organized armed groups.
- UCDP Geo-Referenced Event Dataset: covers individual incidents of armed conflict and organized violence (i.e. clashes, battles and attacks against civilians) in Africa over a 26-year span covering January 1989 to December 2014.

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) Project

The ACLED (http://www.acleddata.com/) produces information on the specific dates and locations of political violence, the types of event, the groups involved, fatalities and changes in territorial control. Information is recorded on the battles, killings, riots and recruitment activities of rebels, governments, militias, armed groups, protesters and civilians.

Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD)

Although not a primary focus of this book, SCAD (https://www.strausscenter.org/scad.html) includes a useful catalogue of protests, riots, strikes, inter-communal conflict, government violence against civilians and other forms of social conflict not systematically tracked in other conflict datasets. SCAD currently includes information on social conflicts from 1990 to 2013, covering all of Africa.

Notes

1 The dataset is available at http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf.

2 Seybolt, Aronson and Fischoff, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

3 For statistical purposes, I take 1963 as the start of the postcolonial era because it was the year that the Organisation of African Unity was established. I define the post-Cold War era as post–1990.

4 There are two minimum thresholds for including an armed conflict in the PITF dataset: a mobilization threshold, wherein each party must mobilize 1,000 or more people (armed agents, demonstrators, troops), and a conflict intensity threshold, whereby there must be at least 1,000 direct conflict-related deaths over the full course of the armed conflict and at least one year when the annual conflict-related death toll exceeds 100 fatalities.

5 Center for Global Policy, ‘Consolidated state failure events’, at http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/consolidated-state-failure-events/.

6 Keen, ‘War and Peace’.

7 Data is taken from the PITF, *Consolidated Problem Set* version 2014 at http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html.

8 Marshall, *Conflict Trends in Africa*.

9 The dataset can be found at www.ucdp.uu.se.

10 Data taken from Themner and Wallensteen, ‘Armed Conflicts, 1946–2013’, p. 543.

11 *Human Security Brief 2007*, p. 23.

12 Clapham, *Africa*; Callghy, Kassimir and Latham (eds), *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa*.

13 Data is taken from UCDP Non-State Conflict Dataset v. 2.5-2014, 1989–2013 at http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_non-state_conflict_dataset_/.

14 Johnson, *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*, p. 143.

15 US General Accounting Office (GAO), *Darfur Crisis*, p. 17.

16 Degomme and Guha-Sapir, ‘Patterns’.

17 Lacina and Gleditsch, ‘Monitoring Trends’, p. 162.

18 Data taken from UCDP Battle-Related Deaths Dataset v.5-2015 (1989–2014), at: http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_battle-related_deaths_dataset/.

19 Data taken from UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset v1.4-2014, 1989–2013, at http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_one-sided_violence_dataset/.

20 For sensible suggestions on how to improve casualty estimates, see Seybolt, Aronson and Fischoff, *Counting Civilian Casualties*.

21 Lacina and Gleditsch, ‘Monitoring Trends’, p. 160.

22 IRC, *Mortality in Eastern DRC* (2000).

23 IRC, *Mortality in Eastern DRC* (2001).

24 IRC, *Mortality in the DRC* (2003).

25 Coghlan et al., ‘Mortality’.

26 IRC, *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (2007).

27 *Human Security Report 2009*.

28 Ibid., pp. 5, 39–41.

29 Ibid., p. 39.

30 See respectively, Roberts, ‘Death Rates’, and Human Security Report, *Overview*.

31 Raleigh et al., ‘Introducing ACLED’, and Sundberg and Melander, ‘Introducing the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset’. There are others,

including the Social Conflict in Africa Database. See Salehyan et al., ‘Social conflict in Africa’.

32 For example, Buhaug and Rød, ‘Local determinants of African civil wars’; Raleigh, ‘Violence against civilians’ and ‘Political hierarchies and landscapes of conflict across Africa’; Choi and Raleigh, ‘Dominant forms of conflict’; and Beardsley, Gleditsch and Lo, ‘Roving bandits?’.

33 ACLED, ‘Dataset Typology Overview between Select Event Datasets – April 2012’ at http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Dataset-Typology-Overview.pdf.

34 ACLED, ‘Data Comparison 2: All Country Years and a Focus on Nigeria and South Africa’ (2012) at http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ACLED-Data-Comparison_Countries.pdf.

35 UCDP consults the Factiva database; then other types of material, including books, journals and NGO reports; consultation with regional experts helps clarify queries; and finally, scrutiny by UCDP project managers and programme directors lead to a final determination. At http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/faq/#How_are_UCDP_data_collected_.

36 Data taken from ACLED Version 5 (1997–2014) Nigeria Country File.

37 If source reports differ or are vague, ACLED reports the lowest total. But if reports mention several or many civilians or unknown, ‘10’ is recorded. If a report mentions dozens, this is recorded as ‘12’. If a report mentions hundreds, this is recorded as ‘100.’ One hundred fatalities is also recorded as the default for ‘massacres.’ Raleigh and Dowd, ‘ACLED Codebook 2015’, pp. 20–1.

38 ‘ACLED Guide for Media Users’, January 2015, p. 10 at http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/ACLED_User-Guide-for-Media_2015.pdf.

39 This was the sum totals of the ‘Boko Haram’ and ‘Boko Haram, State Actor’ perpetrator categories, at http://www.cfr.org/nigeria/nigeria-security-tracker/p29483.

40 Chouin, Reinert and Apard, ‘Body count’, pp. 220ff.

41 Raleigh and Dowd, ‘ACLED Codebook 2015’, p. 21.

42 Van der Windt and Humphreys, ‘Crowdseeding in Eastern Congo’.

43 Will Reno, for example, concluded that ‘the history of warfare in Africa over the past half-century is largely a history of rebel wars within an existing system of states.’ Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 243.

Chapter Two
The Terrain of Struggle

As chapter 1 demonstrated, warfare in Africa cannot be adequately understood using state-centric perspectives because many of the continent's armed conflicts take place on the peripheries of, or outside, the African society of states and do not involve government soldiers. Trying to understand the entire range of actors, institutions and processes that influence the course of Africa's wars is thus daunting, if not practically impossible. Part of the challenge is that events in world politics are interconnected in complicated ways. Indeed, the increasing number, complexity and intensity of interconnections between humans, and between humans and planet earth, are arguably *the* defining features of the contemporary era. Consequently, one of the most useful ways to approach the mega-concept of globalization is to see it as essentially about circulation – the processes through which people and places become interconnected. Understood in this manner, warfare has been a historically pervasive and significant form of interconnection between societies. ‘In and through war’, Tarak Barkawi observed,

> people on both sides come to intensified awareness of one another, reconstruct images of self and other, initiate and react to each other's moves. To be at war is to be interconnected with the enemy. Such connections involve social processes and transformations that should be understood under the rubric of globalization. … From a war and society perspective, war can be seen as an occasion for interconnection, as a form of circulation between combatant parties. In and through war, societies are transformed, while at the same time societies shape the nature of war.[1]

Warfare thus exists in a symbiotic relationship with society: wars shape societies but societies also influence the shape of wars. Thus, to ‘abstract the conduct of war from the environment in which it was fought’, Michael Howard concluded, is ‘to ignore dimensions essential to its understanding.’[2] This is as true of Africa's wars as of those anywhere else.[3]

Life's interconnections also raise the fundamental question of which phenomena need to be put under our analytical microscopes to understand Africa's wars. Carolyn Nordstrom captured the essence of this challenge when she asked: Where are the battlefields? Who are the players? And, where should we locate the study of war?[4] Unfortunately, there is no easy or formulaic answer. Chapter 1 noted how existing datasets work with different menus of conflict events and actors they consider relevant for understanding organized violence. Furthermore, as complex social processes, wars are not isolated events. But, once we recognize the importance of interconnections, where does one stop? Since the war in eastern DRC, for example, is influenced by the scramble for minerals used in the production of high-tech computers, telephones and games consoles, should our analysis of that war include the manufacturers and consumers of those items, most of whom have never set foot in the Congo? In sum, do we need what Richard Jackson called ‘a new ontology of contemporary warfare in Africa’?[5]

The short answer is ‘yes’: we need a conceptual framework that can tell us which phenomena to focus upon and how they interrelate. To understand which phenomena to study, Robert Cox's neo-Gramscian approach to thinking about global politics is useful because it focuses on the different types of state–society complexes which form within particular historical structures.[6] First of all, this approach offers a relevant corrective to the traditional state-centric accounts which have dominated International Relations (IR) theorizing. As such, it is well suited to the African context because the continent's ‘power constellations are not entirely state-centric’.[7] Second, Cox's framework is built around the issue of social change. This is useful because it is during periods of war that social change occurs most intensely. ‘War’, as Morten Bøås observed, ‘is by its very nature an instrument for social and economic restructuring. It is a site for innovation, which reorders social, economic, and political life.’[8] By focusing on the actors, institutions and processes through which social change occurs, Cox's ontology provides a useful starting point for thinking about the dynamics of warfare.

To understand how such phenomena interrelate, I revisit what IR scholars refer to as the ‘levels-of-analysis’ problem.[9] This allows us to recognize that Africa's wars are complex social processes which are *simultaneously*, but to

varying degrees, local, national, regional and global. In the rest of this chapter I discuss Africa's wars as a levels-of-analysis problem before examining some of the major characteristics of the African terrain on which these struggles have been waged. This provides the conceptual and historical backdrop for the analysis of the ingredients of Africa's war recipes conducted in part II of the book.

Africa's Wars as a Levels-of-Analysis Problem

The terrain of struggle on which African wars have been waged is multi-levelled and populated by a variety of actors, structures and processes. I use the term ‘levels’ in an ontological sense to refer to distinct contexts – generally organized on the principle of spatial scale – ‘where both outcomes and sources of explanation can be located’.[10] As Barry Buzan has explained, within IR the levels-of-analysis *problem* is generally thought to revolve around ‘how to identify and treat different types of location in which sources of explanation for observed phenomena can be found.’[11] In this sense, there are actually two problems: first, how to locate and identify the relevant levels and, second, deciding how explanatory weight should be distributed among them. Consequently, there exists what might be called a ‘levels-of analysis’ problem and a ‘levels-of-explanation’ problem.[12]

My answer to the first problem (of analysis) is to offer a framework based on the four distinct levels which are of most direct relevance for understanding the dynamics of Africa's armed conflicts: local, national, regional and global.[13] These are summarized in table 2.1. There is no ‘individual level’ because, as Colin Wight has persuasively argued, there is no need for one, ‘since individuals feature in every level and are tied into their social contexts’.[14] Nor is there a ‘bureaucratic level’ about which a similar point could be made: all social formations – including tribes, religious sects, insurgencies, firms, states and international institutions – could be understood as involving some type of formal or informal officials, administrators and bureaucrats.

Table 2.1 Levels of analysis in Africa's armed conflicts

Level-of-analysis	Description
Local	Relations between individuals and their immediate (sub-state) politico-geographic context
National	Focused on the institutions of state power
Regional	Geographically coherent, sub-global security complexes which involve the agents of at least two states
Global	De-territorialized networks, structures, processes, institutions or belief systems (with the potential to be global in scope)

With regard to the second 'levels-of-explanation' problem, the challenge is complicated by the fact that, in contemporary Africa, and elsewhere, the four levels are not completely separate from one another. As Kassimir and Latham have observed, since 'considerable amounts of social power and political outcomes are being generated where international, local and national forces operate coterminously … it becomes impossible at times even to identify a set of dynamics as squarely part of one level or another.'[15] In light of this pertinent observation, I suggest that the concept of distinct *levels* of analysis with rigid spatial divides between them paints an unhelpful mental image. While the different levels are, by definition, not completely reducible to one another, the idea of fluid 'scapes' that bleed into one another provides a more useful mental image. As used by the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, the notion of scapes captures the essence of a 'world in motion' rather than static relationships.[16]

Recognizing the interrelationships between different levels or scapes is useful, but it does not tell us how, or if, they might be combined to arrive at one overall explanation of the armed conflict in question.[17] As discussed in the Introduction, my approach is to reject mono-causal explanations of warfare in the sense that there is always more than one story to tell about the causes of particular conflicts (as well as the phenomenon of warfare in general) and that these stories differ depending on the level of explanation prioritized. If the individual levels are not reducible to one another, then, logically, neither can our explanations of warfare be collapsed into a single, all-encompassing causal account. This means the levels-of-explanation

problem cannot be resolved at the purely abstract level. Instead, the most sophisticated accounts will be those that provide a rich historical description of how the different levels interacted to produce a particular conflict. With this caveat in mind, the rest of this section briefly summarizes and illustrates these four distinct levels or what might be referred to as Africa's ‘warscapes’.

Local warscapes

Africa's wars all have local roots. Here, ‘local’ refers to the relationship between individuals and their immediate politico-geographic context (Cox's state–society complexes). In spatial terms this immediate context is defined as sub-state to separate it from national level dynamics discussed below.

In many of Africa's wars, local agendas and the contours of domestic politics played decisive roles in their onset, their sustenance and, ultimately, their endings.[18] These agendas have taken a variety of forms, including a sense of entitlement to land and other resources, attempts to control systems of governance, and questions about identity, belonging and citizenship.

With regard to the onset of war, analysts have convincingly used statistical data across a range of cases to demonstrate the importance of sub-state factors. Østby, Nordås and Rød, for instance, used data collected from first-level administrative units in twenty-two African states (rather than national-level data) to show that armed conflict was more likely to occur in sub-state regions that lacked education services, were relatively deprived compared to the country mean, had strong intra-regional inequalities, and combined the presence of natural resources and relative deprivation.[19]

Sub-state factors were also important in sustaining warfare and in shaping its dynamics. The ways in which armed groups mobilize and endure, for example, were significantly affected by local-level factors such as people deciding to take up arms after personal and localized experiences of humiliation suffered at the hands of government soldiers or rebels, or out of a desire to avenge similar acts meted out to their friends or families.[20] In an analysis of African civil wars from 1970 to 2001, Buhaug and Rød used data related to 100 x 100 km grid cells (rather than national-level data) to conclude that armed conflict clustered unevenly in spatial terms. Specifically, they found that conflicts over territory (secessionist conflicts)

were more likely in sparsely populated regions near the state border, at a distance from the capital and without significant rough terrain, while conflict over governance issues was more likely in regions that are densely populated, near diamond fields and near the capital city.[21] The burgeoning literature analysing the micro-foundations of violent conflict – i.e. the causes and effects of conflict at the community, household and individual levels – has also shown that it is particularly useful in accounting for heterogeneity across individuals and groups within the same conflict.[22] Pastoral conflicts are another widespread phenomenon where most of the drivers of violence are rooted in local conditions related to the nexus between ecology and governance structures (see chapter 4).[23]

Recent studies of particular African wars have drawn similar conclusions to these general hypotheses. In eastern DRC, for example, Séverine Autesserre has convincingly argued that it is impossible to understand violence in the Kivus without paying attention to some very local antagonisms, such as leadership struggles over specific militias, disagreement over who controls the resources won by the group and who gets appointed to local administrative positions, and opposing claims on land, mining sites, and traditional positions among villagers, as well as tensions arising over ethnicity and clan affiliations.[24] Detailed studies of Sudan's wars have made similar points. In the conflict between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, for example, the government's tactic of recruiting local militias from within the south hardened local ethnic and social divides, which in turn made local identity dynamics crucial to understanding the conflict's twists and turns.[25] The same was true for Darfur's most recent war, with analysts emphasizing the ways in which ethnic/tribal rifts at local levels lay at the heart of the conflict.[26]

The preceding points suggest there is considerable evidence that Africa's wars have been fought over and involved changing configurations of power, authority and identity in the relationships between local actors. Indeed, as shown in chapter 1, it is notable how many recent African conflicts have been fought between two or more localized non-state actors.[27] Thus, although Africa's conflicts occur within the legal confines of an international society of states, in an important sense they are not always *of*

that society. As important as local dynamics are, however, they are not the whole story.

National warscapes

Regimes in Africa's weak states often found it difficult to effectively broadcast their power far beyond the capital city and other strategic locales.[28] Yet struggles to control state institutions have at times been crucial for understanding why wars began and how they unfolded.

With regard to the outbreak of conflict, as Christopher Clapham put it, ‘The place to start trying to understand any political crisis is always with the government in power.’[29] This insight also finds support in more quantitative studies. For example, one recent analysis of all ethnic groups worldwide between 1946 and 2005 concluded that exclusion from state power was a crucial factor in whether ethnic groups started rebellions, especially if this was combined with prior experience of conflict and the group's potential to mobilize support was high.[30] Similarly, as discussed in more detail in chapter 3, the PITF concluded that regime type was the most reliable predictor of instability, with ‘partial democracies with factionalism’ being the most unstable.[31] Recent qualitative research using examples from conflicts in Sierra Leone and Nigeria placed similar emphasis on state power, concluding that the ‘critical juncture’ in the outbreak of armed conflict appeared when national rulers were ‘no longer able to assert their dominance over local strongmen in their patronage network’. At that point, armed groups were utilized ‘for their own commercial and political benefit without the ruler's authorization’.[32]

As discussed in more detail in chapters 3 to 5, the principal explanations for the state's importance revolve around the importance of juridical sovereignty and its role as a source of resources – both the local resources which the state's functionaries are able to bring under their control and external resources procured from a variety of actors, including international financial institutions, other international organizations, donor states and private corporations.[33] External resources in particular have tended to accrue to groups which controlled the capital city, producing what Clapham called ‘letterbox sovereignty’ – the idea ‘that whoever opened the letters in the presidential palace received the invitation to represent the state

concerned in the United Nations and other international bodies.'[34] In cases where this applied, the conflict might bypass considerable swathes of the country which were considered of little strategic consequence in the struggle.

Contests over state power are also important for understanding the dynamics of warfare in more peripheral zones. In his detailed study of rebellions across independent Africa, William Reno makes a convincing case that Africa's rebels have always been a reflection of 'the political order against which they fight.'[35] Hence, as the nature of statehood evolved, so too have the type of struggles waged by the continent's rebels. Reno also noted that on the specific issue of violence towards civilians, in many cases ties to patronage politics in the capital influenced armed groups. In Sierra Leone, for example, variation in the way different armed, non-state groups treated civilians was influenced by the patronage networks from which they emerged before the war broke out. First of all, Reno concluded that, 'the closer the connection of local authorities to capital-based patronage politics, the more likely are local armed groups to behave in a predatory fashion vis-à-vis the interests of their home communities.'[36] Second, he observed that 'armed groups in communities where the local political elite were relatively marginal to pre-conflict patronage networks tend to behave in a much more protective fashion vis-à-vis the interests of their home communities.'[37] Whether these conclusions would hold for groups inspired by a warped mix of religious beliefs such as Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria or *al-Shabaab* in Somalia is debatable. Nevertheless, Reno's conclusions highlight the importance of investigating how national political structures influence conflict dynamics.

Regional warscapes

Particularly since the end of the Cold War, regional developments have been identified as crucial for understanding contemporary security dynamics in Africa and elsewhere.[38] Thus the regional dimensions of Africa's armed conflicts constitute a third distinct warscape. Specifically, the disjuncture between the processes of warfare and Africa's political borders helped form a series of 'regional security complexes' characterized

by ‘durable patterns of amity and enmity taking the form of subglobal, geographically coherent patterns of security interdependence’.[39]

Regional wars can assume many forms, but among the most common African variants have been government forces crossing into neighbouring states to eliminate rebel bases and supply lines and/or intimidating countries which gave sanctuary to rebels; or, conversely, neighbouring governments acting in support of the incumbent regime; neighbouring states supporting insurgencies in order to weaken and destabilize regional rivals; and refugee flows producing camps that become potential pools for rebel recruitment.[40] The archetypal example of such regional dynamics wasthe war fought in the DRC (1998–2003) between Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad and Sudan.[41] More recent examples include the multinational coalitions formed in late 2014 by the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to fight Boko Haram militants, and the Regional Task Force assembled in 2011 in central Africa to fight the Lord's Resistance Army.

The importance of Africa's regional political geography was intensified by three main factors: military inefficiency, the disjuncture between political identities and state boundaries, and the combination of weak states and porous borders. First, the region became important in part because most African militaries could operate efficiently only over relatively short distances (if they could operate efficiently at all).[42] This meant that most African states usually engaged in significant military interactions with their neighbours or states nearby.[43] Regional warfare thus became a real possibility in a way that continental warfare did not. A point reinforced by recent cross-border interventions in east Africa by Eritrea in Djibouti (2008), Kenya and Ethiopia in Somalia (2011), and Uganda in South Sudan (2013).

The significance of the regional level was also partly a consequence of prominent kinship and other cross-border identity ties which facilitated all sorts of transnational relations in Africa's war zones.[44] They also gave governments in neighbouring states incentives to become actively engaged in those conflicts.[45] Examples of such transnational actors are cross-border insurgencies, pastoral communities, mercenaries, corporations engaged in various forms of resource extraction, and organized criminal gangs, as well

as humanitarian and development NGOs and the displaced populations they assist.[46] A particularly notorious example emerged during the West African wars of the 1990s where Human Rights Watch identified the formation of an ‘insurgent diaspora’ – a pool of professional warriors who moved from one conflict to the next and exemplified the transnational dimension of warfare.[47] Another good example from Central Africa is the increasingly multinational and transnational Lord's Resistance Army, a roaming insurgent group that sparked a war in which an estimated 65,000 civilians have been killed since the late 1980s in northern Uganda, southern Sudan, DRC and Central African Republic (see chapter 7).[48]

Finally, the relatively porous state borders evident in many of Africa's war zones, combined with the inability of many regimes to effectively project power over all their official territory, meant that there were often relatively few impediments to spillover effects or the unwanted interference of external powers. The frequent criss-crossing of the Sudan–Chad border by armed groups engaged in the war in Darfur and the circulation of *al-Shabaab* fighters across the Kenya–Somalia border are only two of the more prominent recent examples.

Global warscapes

Despite the stubborn prevalence of the view that Africa is the place that globalization forgot, in reality the continent and its conflicts have all been deeply affected by an array of globalizing structures, networks, processes, institutions and belief systems.[49] At an abstract level, as Ann Hironaka has argued, international processes have long played a crucial role in perpetuating (and often escalating) conflicts in three main ways: they have affected the dynamics of state behaviour and civil wars by conferring statehood on some entities and not others, by sustaining particular models of appropriate state structures, and by diffusing cultural scripts which have informed and guided state behaviour.[50]

The type of phenomena that exemplify globalizing dynamics include what Thomas Callaghy and his colleagues called ‘transboundary formations’, which link the local to the global through an array of structures, networks and discourses that ultimately produce and/or sustain forms of authority and order.[51] These phenomena constitute the fourth and final warscape

identified here. From the deep structures of global capitalism and the more fickle policies of the international financial institutions, from the diffusion of Christianity and Islam across the continent to the uncertain impact of rapidly globalizing norms about humanitarianism, human rights, anti-imperialism and racial equality, Africa's conflicts have been intimately bound up with the ebb and flow of globalizing trends in world politics.

In security terms, after a period of geo-strategic neglect that came with the end of the Cold War, from the late 1990s, Africa became an increasingly important front in the US-led ‘global war on terror’, initially because of *al-Qa'ida*'s activities in east Africa but later also across North Africa and the Sahel. In response, Washington established its Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa in Djibouti in 2002 and then a new Combatant Command for the continent (AFRICOM), which became operational in 2008 but was based in Germany. During the twenty-first century, Africa also became home to many of the UN's largest peace operations, as well as most of its peacekeepers, accounting for roughly 80 per cent of UN uniformed personnel by 2015 (see chapter 10).

In the political economy sector, one significant example has been the way in which the international relief/development industry has interacted with Africa's war zones (see chapter 11).[52] Indeed, the quintessential displacement camp often came to represent an intensified encounter between the global forces of the humanitarian relief industry and the local participants in the conflict concerned. As sites where belligerents often tried to recruit, resupply and reorganize, as well as places of shelter for the victims, displacement camps administered by aid agencies became a symbol of globalized warfare *par excellence*. Other good examples are the human networks which facilitated the licit and illicit markets for arms and conflict goods such as diamonds, oil, coltan, rubber, timber, etc.[53] Estimates from eastern DRC suggested that by 2015 the illicit trade in diamonds, timber, charcoal, 3T minerals and wildlife generated some US$1.25 billion each year, of which 10–30 per cent went to organized criminal groups.[54]

In the social sector, a pertinent example is the organized diaspora groups that funded or advocated for particular belligerents from many of the world's important political centres, such as Washington, DC, New York, Brussels, Geneva, London, Paris, etc. One of the most infamous

contemporary cases was the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), which emerged from the remnants of Rwanda's genocidal regime in 1994. The FDLR's operations in the DRC were orchestrated by leadership networks in Europe, especially in Germany and France. In other cases, such as the multiple attempts to assemble an effective transitional government for Somalia (2002–12), individuals were plucked from the exiled or diaspora communities to become senior politicians in their country of origin.

In the ideological realm, local conflicts have been caught up in more global currents, if only for the instrumental purpose of extracting resources from particular external constituencies. As the rivalry between the communist and capitalist blocs subsided, these were more likely to be found in regimes claiming to defend democracy and ‘good governance’ from its enemies or, especially in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, religious networks inspired by Islamic *jihad* (see chapter 7).[55]

To be clear, I am not suggesting that ‘the global’ level automatically exercises power over ‘the local’ or other levels. If that were true there would be homogeneous patterns of behaviour across the entire globe. In reality, wars around the world look different precisely because there are interconnections between the local and the global and the various places in between rather than a situation where one level dominates all the others.

In the African cases of wars waged in the name of Islamic *jihad*, for example, the specific movements that emerged in Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan, Somalia and elsewhere were influenced by global dynamics in the form of Wahhabi and Takfiri teachings and shadowy networks such as *al-Qa'ida* and the so-called Afghan Arabs. But these African groups were also shaped, arguably more, by domestic political concerns. Moreover, Islamist projects in Egypt and Sudan in particular had a significant influence on the wider Arab world beyond Africa. By 2010, some datasets were registering a significant rise in violence across Africa related to self-declared Islamist groups. ACLED, for example, recorded a sharp rise in violent Islamist activity both in absolute terms, and as a proportion of overall conflict events. This increase coincided with an expansion of the countries in which operatives of these groups were active. While the majority of violent acts centred on Somalia and Nigeria, rising numbers were also reported in Algeria, Kenya, Mali, Egypt, Niger and elsewhere. The principal

perpetrators included *al-Shabaab*, Boko Haram, Ansar Dine and AQIM, each of which operated with distinct objectives, strategies, and modalities of violence.[56]

Analysts should therefore proceed from the assumption that Africa's warscapes are simultaneously local, national, regional and global, albeit to varying degrees. Although the levels-of-explanation problem cannot be resolved at the abstract level alone, it would be useful if more historically grounded studies would try and clarify which levels are doing most explanatory work and how they interrelate.

Major Features of the Contemporary African Terrain

With these insights in mind, how might we summarize the most important characteristics of Africa's recent armed conflicts? This section addresses this question by sketching the political context, the central actors, and some of the methods frequently employed by the belligerents. Of course, these do not apply equally to all of Africa's wars, but this brief survey aims to illuminate the main features of the political terrain on which these conflicts were played out. Subsequent chapters in the book examine particular cases in more detail, while the conclusion to this chapter offers some general explanations for why Africa's wars have unfolded in this way.

Blurred boundaries between ‘war’ and ‘peace’

As discussed in chapter 1, even basic questions about the number of armed conflicts in Africa have failed to generate a consensus. Part of the reason for this is the different methodologies employed by researchers. But there is also the more fundamental problem that the basic categories of ‘war’ and ‘peace’ are not always easy to tell apart. As David Keen warned, ‘We should not let the words “war” and “peace” seduce us into believing that neither has elements (or seeds) of the other.’[57] Of course, warfare is usually defined as involving organized violence that produces casualties. But warfare routinely involves much peaceful activity interspersed with what Clausewitz famously described as ‘pulsations of violence’. Indeed, military

service was said to be about enduring long periods of boredom punctuated by spasms of utter terror.[58]

From the other end of the war–peace spectrum, Peters and Richards observed that ‘armed conflict is at times no more than an intensification of structural violence present in ‘peaceful' society.’[59] Chapter 1 considered how the relevant datasets adopted different casualty thresholds to determine what counts as ‘armed conflict’, ‘major armed conflict’ or ‘war’. And in defining these terms it also appears to matter how people are killed. Violent deaths resulting from organized criminal activity, for instance, are rarely counted. Nor are victims of riots involving civilian mobs. Nor are most victims of state repression who have not formed an organized insurgency. If these types of organized violence were included, our graphs of war and peace might look quite different. South Africa's ‘miraculous’ transition from apartheid during the late 1980s and early 1990s involved thousands of violent deaths each year. Similarly, Nigeria would constantly be placed in the ‘war’ category if violent deaths through state brutality or organized riots were counted. Between 2000 and 2007, for example, the Nigerian police force alone is estimated to have killed more than 8,000 civilians, and in the period between 1999 and 2006 well over 11,000 people died in ethnic, political and religious violence in the north of the country (see also chapter 7).[60] In 2015, Amnesty International reported that in the course of its operations against Boko Haram, the Nigerian military had extrajudicially executed more than 1,000 people and more than 7,000 people had died in military detention as a result of starvation, over-crowding and denial of medical assistance.[61]

In other cases, some African countries continued to experience high numbers of violent deaths even after ‘peace’ was ostensibly attained through the signing of agreements ending the various wars. In the two extreme cases of Angola's protracted conflict and Rwanda's 1994 genocide, it is important to recall that the majority of the victims were killed after the respective peace agreements ending the civil wars had been concluded. These issues are thus particularly important when addressing the question of war endings and are discussed in more detail in chapter 9. Finally, it is important to recognize that populations in countries that did not experience a civil war or armed conflict for decades can suffer from higher levels of violent death than those who live in active war zones. During 2012, for

example, Lesotho and South Africa recorded the highest proportional rate of violent deaths (usually homicides) across the whole of Africa, at 37.2 and 31 people per 100,000 respectively, a rate higher than countries in the throes of war, including Somalia, Sudan and DRC.[62]

A multitude of belligerents, with multiple motives

A second important feature of Africa's post-Cold War conflicts was the multiplicity of actors involved. In crude terms, these can be divided into armed and unarmed groups. Those who found themselves in war zones without guns (or without some form of armed protection) were generally either local civilians caught up in armed conflicts or personnel working for international organizations and humanitarian and/or development NGOs.

Of the armed groups, there were those who carry guns legitimately, such as the representatives of states and various types of peacekeepers from international organizations such as the UN and regional arrangements (see chapter 10). There were also many varieties of less legitimate armed non-state actors, among them insurgents, militias, paramilitaries, self-defence groups, mercenaries, private military contractors and criminal gangs. In DRC alone, by 2015, the MONUSCO peacekeeping force had identified 78 non-state armed groups active in its area of operations.[63] Many of these actors have included children within their ranks, perhaps most notoriously Laurent Kabila's *kadogos* (little ones) or Charles Taylor's small boy units. But several governments, including South Sudan and Somalia, have also used child soldiers within their national armed forces.

There are many reasons why people resorted to using guns in Africa's conflict zones. It is also important to remember that these motives often changed over time as circumstances altered. For one thing, small arms and light weapons were relatively abundant, easy to use and cheap. Moreover, wielding a gun could bring benefits as a means to seek revenge for previous humiliation, to generate instant obedience and extort resources, or perhaps to gain respect. As one child combatant in Liberia's civil war put it, ‘When I get a gun I can be free.’[64] Some individuals turned to arms to try and address political grievances when other avenues were closed down, while for others guns offered the only way to defend themselves and their families. Wielding a weapon thus sometimes formed an important part of a

survival strategy in situations where often the worst position to occupy was that of an unarmed civilian caught between rapacious rebels and unpaid and unprofessional government troops. In Zaire/DRC, for example, it was common to hear the phrase *civil azali bilanga ya militaire*: ‘the civilian is the [corn] field of the military.’ Many others were simply coerced into fighting.

Two other important general points are worth noting about the actors in Africa's war zones. First, it was often difficult to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, especially when the fighting involved non-state actors and where children were participants. Indeed, some armed groups, perhaps most notably Boko Haram, seemed to reject the basic distinction, and the many laws of war that went with it. Second, even if one could identify the combatants, it was not always easy to discern whose side they were on. Sometimes this was because of rapidly shifting alliance politics in conflicts involving numerous armed factions. In south-central Somalia, for instance, alliances of convenience between particular sub-clans and their militias could form and disintegrate with bewildering speed. On other occasions it was because the combatants did not always follow orders from their superiors and changed sides based on their own cost–benefit calculations of the situation at hand. The archetypal example of this sort of behaviour was Sierra Leone's ‘sobels’ – soldiers/rebels – the nickname given to soldiers who fought for the government during the day but who discarded their uniforms at night so that they could pretend to be rebels in order to extort local civilians. These same soldiers also engaged in regular acts of collaboration with their erstwhile rebel opponents. In what was known locally as the ‘sell game’, barter and exchange between ostensible enemies was quite common and sometimes even included exchanges of weapons and ammunition.[65]

Of governments and rebels

Of all the actors in Africa's war zones, it was governments and insurgencies which proved the most significant during the post-Cold War period.[66] As discussed in part II of this book, African states embroiled in armed conflicts can be divided into three broad types. First, there were states characterized by weak and incompetent institutions, which consequently suffered from an inability to control their own territory and populations. Whether this

weakness stemmed from the decline of superpower patronage after the Cold War ended or whether it was down to an inability to generate sufficient domestic sources of revenues to train competent security forces, governments in these states proved unable to protect their citizens or their border zones from rebel incursions. Some of these can be dubbed ‘archipelago states’ because their rulers concentrated on controlling only those regions that provided significant economic resources, or what French colonists referred to as *Afrique utile* (areas that produced revenues sufficient to pay for administration) (see also chapter 4).[67] Samuel Doe's Liberia or Joseph Momoh's Sierra Leone would fit comfortably into this mould.

Then there were states where national security institutions were deliberately kept weak and factionalized by paranoid rulers – what Alex de Waal dubbed ‘fragmentation as policy’.[68] Perhaps the quintessential case of this policy was Zaire, where President Mobutu effectively handed out to local strongmen licences to pillage and loot. He did this in order to keep the country sufficiently destabilized to avoid a threat to his power coming from within the military itself. In Somalia, President Mohamed Siad Barre's decision to arm various clan-based militias in order to try and retain his grip on power had a similar effect on the authority of the national army and the fate of the Somali state. While leaders of such states generally developed some form of trusted presidential guard, the rest of their armed forces were highly unlikely to engage in the sustained, efficient and dedicated defence of the regime. This was clearly demonstrated in Mobutu's case, as Zaire's army all but collapsed when Laurent Kabila and his (misnamed) Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo marched on Kinshasa in 1996–7.

Although some of the literature discussing the concept of ‘new wars’ suggests that they occur in the context of weak and disintegrating state structures, there are also cases of African armed conflicts where the regime in question was a force to be reckoned with when it came to wielding instruments of violence, if not necessarily with great efficiency or across all of its nominal territory. In these cases, regimes used state institutions to oppress segments of their populations either for the purposes of extortion or to weaken political opponents. In the most intense period of bloodletting in the whole post-Cold War period to date, between April and July 1994, institutions of the Rwandan state were used to exterminate perhaps as many

as 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus (see chapter 6). In such cases, the government's official armed forces were normally supplemented by proxies of various kinds. If these various paramilitary groups could not be harnessed to the regime's agenda through appeals to nationalism, ethnic identity or other forms of ideological persuasion, promises of land, status or loot in return for their violent services often worked just as well. Of all the African cases where this scenario applies, it is probably President Omar al-Bashir's regime in Sudan (1989–present) that has had the most extensive practice at using proxy militias to wage its wars in the south, west and east of the country.

After states, insurgents were the most important armed actors in Africa's recent war zones. Insurgents assumed many different forms depending on the nature of their enemies and their relationship to the local population in areas where they operated.[69] While some, like the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone or *al-Shabaab* militants in Somalia, were pitted against weak states with ragtag armies, others, such as Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels in Angola or the ONLF insurgents in Ethiopia, were forced to fight long, protracted campaigns against well-funded governments with large militaries. Similarly, while some insurgents tried to build support among local populations (e.g. the SPLA and POLISARIO), others treated civilians as little more than resources to be pillaged whenever they saw fit (e.g. the LRA and FDLR). And, as noted above, many of Africa's insurgents went transnational, using territory outside their target state to mobilize and sustain their activities.[70]

As Christopher Clapham pointed out, if we analyse Africa's armed actors according to the functions they perform it is sometimes difficult to draw clear distinctions between governments and insurgents, because some insurgencies assumed the characteristics of states in important respects: their participants usually had physical control of a territory and population; they were often recipients of international aid, especially that distributed through NGOs; and some of them had varying but sometimes formal, diplomatic relations with external states. In these circumstances, Clapham noted that ‘the dividing line between “states” and “non-states” ha[d] become so blurred as to be virtually imperceptible.’[71]

During Liberia's civil war, for instance, when Amos Sawyer become head of the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) in late 1990, most of the country and its resources was controlled by Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front rebels. In this situation, being head of the Liberian state came with virtually no practical power and with the sizable headache of assuming responsibility for paying off Liberia's national debts, which were owed to various international financial institutions. Between 1990 and 1994, for instance, Taylor's income was estimated to be at least $75 million a year, while Sawyer was saddled with a $3 billion debt and an income of approximately $20 million per year, most of which came from fees paid on the international fleet of Liberian-registered ships.[72] This situation generated a popular joke in Monrovia that the IGNU really stood for the Imported Government of No Use.[73]

On the other side of the government–insurgent spectrum, for long periods the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) became what Zachariah Mampilly called ‘counterstate sovereigns’ running their own ‘sovereign formations’.[74] The SPLM/A constructed an elaborate system of governance designed to administer local populations in its territorial strongholds. These insurgent institutions involved regulating the election of local chiefs and functioning of their courts; a judicial system complete with a penal code for its soldiers; community schools using curriculums from Uganda and Kenya; health care systems, often based on getting SPLM/A staff into healthcare centres established by foreign aid organizations; and a communications infrastructure including Radio SPLA, initially broadcast out of Ethiopia. The SPLM/A also engaged in international relations like a state, using unofficial embassies and diplomats to court its various supporters and explain its positions to the rest of the world. As part of this effort, the SPLM/A explicitly incorporated transnational NGOs and international agencies into its governance project, not least by establishing its own charitable NGO – the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association – and by effectively co-opting the huge international relief effort Operation Lifeline Sudan across much of south Sudan. All this helped the SPLM/A bolster its case for being treated as the legitimate ‘sovereign’ representative of the south Sudanese.

The widespread prevalence of such cases led Clapham to conclude that the post-Cold War order in Africa was not ‘crisply divided into entities which

do and do not count as “states” ’. Instead, it consisted ‘of a mass of power structures which, regardless of formal designation, enjoy greater or lesser degrees of statehood.’[75] It is in this context that Cox's focus on state–society complexes is particularly useful because, as even this brief discussion illustrates, non-state actors sometimes possessed more of the attributes of empirical statehood than the internationally recognized governments they were fighting.

The purposes of war: objectives beyond victory

Once war and society are understood as existing in a symbiotic relationship, it becomes clear that the type of actors and societies involved will influence the type of wars that develop. So how did Africa's belligerents conduct their conflicts? The short answer is that Africa's wars, like those elsewhere, tended to reflect the objectives being pursued by the actors conducting them as well as the incentive structures open to them. And, as David Keen has persuasively argued, three aims were particularly evident beyond traditional notions of victory: limiting the exposure of one's own forces to violence, accumulating resources, and suppressing political opposition.[76] In Africa, limiting violence to one's own forces and supporters was practised in various ways, including by getting proxies to do most of the fighting; ensuring most violence took place in areas away from one's core constituents; buying off would-be enemies; as well as avoiding exposing one's armed forces to battles against competent opponents. Regimes suppressing domestic political opposition by proclaiming the need for populations to be patriotic, steadfast and united in the face of an emergency caused by a common external enemy have a long tradition, including in parts of Africa.

Using war to accumulate resources is also a time-honoured practice. Alex de Waal went as far as to suggest that, at least in the Horn of Africa, getting money through violence and spending it was ‘the very essence of political business’.[77] During war, as with periods of peace, all parties need to accrue resources. Without resources – especially loyal followers, provisions and weapons – waging war is impossible (see chapter 4). When resources flowed in relative abundance from a foreign superpower or another external patron such as a Gaddafi, Bashir or a diaspora network, this was not too time-consuming, although it did create headaches over how to manage the

distribution of those resources in ways that did not weaken group cohesion and effectiveness.[78] When external patronage dried up or resources were scarce, however, it was particularly important not to waste them. Although it is often forgotten, the quickest way to lose resources or degrade one's armed forces is to engage in sustained combat with a competent opponent. Consequently, and quite sensibly from a military point of view, with the notable exceptions of the war fought between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998–2000) and a few pitched battles in the war in the DRC (1998–2003), most African conflicts did not witness many large or decisive battles because the belligerents usually tried hard to avoid fighting reasonably competent opposition: why fight enemy soldiers when you might be able to cut deals with them and extort local civilians instead? This explains how there could be so many armed conflicts in Africa with relatively so few soldiers killed in battle (see figure 1.10). In Sudan, for instance, during periods where the frontlines were relatively well established, government and SPLA soldiers were rarely keen to fight each other but instead would fire ritual warning shots when patrols came close to one another. One observer wryly remarked, ‘No wonder this war has taken so long. It is like a boxing match on a football pitch.’[79]

Most of Africa's conflicts were therefore characterized by the use of guerrilla tactics and counter-insurgency operations, with relatively few large-scale engagements. Arguably the most common form of extended battle consisted of the sieges of particular towns and/or garrisons that occupied strategically valuable locales, such as Abyei or Bukavu, or which overlooked important supply routes and sources of minerals, such as Kisangani and Goma in the DRC or the diamond-rich areas of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The single most important settlement, largely because of the sovereignty benefits that might come with it, was often the capital city of the state in question, and certainly significant battles were waged over some of these, including Bangui, Freetown, Kigali, Kinshasa, Luanda, Mogadishu, Monrovia and N’Djamena. Other wars, however, never made it to the capital and were confined largely to the periphery. This had traditionally been the case in Sudan, which is why the JEM's blitzkrieg of May 2008, which reached the outskirts of Khartoum, was particularly shocking for the ruling regime.

The importance of resources meant that all belligerents (governments and non-state actors alike) had to develop effective strategies to accumulate and keep them. Away from the battlefield, one of these strategies was ‘selling’ their cause through appealing propaganda in the hope of attracting political support and funds from domestic or external allies or diaspora communities.[80] A more direct approach was to employ coercion to plunder and extort.[81]

Targeting civilians

Of all the forms of coercion employed by African governments and insurgents, it was the use of atrocities against civilians that usually attracted the greatest attention from outsiders, particularly Western media outlets. Indeed, the barbaric nature of atrocities committed against civilians is a central leitmotif running through many journalistic accounts of Africa's wars. Any list of atrocities is potentially very long, but a useful starting point is the seventeen types of violations identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone in its study of that country's civil war (1991–2002): abduction, amputation, arbitrary detention, assault/beating, destruction of property, drugging, extortion, forced cannibalism, forced displacement, forced labour, forced recruitment, killing, looting, physical torture, rape, sexual abuse and sexual slavery.[82] While in Sierra Leone's case the majority of these actions were perpetrated by RUF rebels, government soldiers also frequently committed them as well.

According to ACLED, from 1997 to 2010, the African continent witnessed around 900 to 1,700 events involving violence against civilians each year. However, since 2010 the numbers have risen significantly to a peak of over 4,000 events causing over 13,500 deaths during 2014. Most of these fatalities were perpetrated by political militias, notably those in Nigeria, Central African Republic, Somalia, and the Sudans, although government forces in both Nigeria and South Sudan were also responsible for over 600 civilian deaths that year alone.[83] In contrast, the UCDP recorded a relative spike of 4,298 fatalities from one-sided violence in 2009, but catalogued much smaller numbers for 2010–12 with a figure of 3,495 fatalities for 2013 (see figure 1.11).

There are several common explanations for why civilians were deliberately targeted in Africa's wars. The first relates to the broad definition of ‘the enemy’ used by the belligerents in many African conflicts. When the enemy was defined broadly to include civilians and non-combatants on the opposing side (or even anybody not on ‘your side’), it helped belligerents to legitimize violence perpetrated against ordinary people. Moreover, it was always easier to attack civilians than other armed groups. In the most extreme cases, defining the enemy to include all ‘Tutsis’, or ‘Fur’, or ‘*abids*’, or ‘non-believers’, etc., helped to legitimize a wide variety of atrocities where the aim was the extermination or displacement of a particular group of people. In such circumstances, the depiction of women as the bearers of the next generation of ‘enemies’ or the prize assets of enemy males was used to justify all sorts of sexual violence and torture. And unfortunately, according to a new database on sexual violence in armed conflict, wars in Africa seemed to suffer from a higher prevalence of sexual violence than those in Asia and Europe.[84] In cases where the principal aim was expulsion rather than extermination, atrocities tended to be used against the few in order to spread fear among the many.

A second explanation involved a variety of practical considerations used to justify the targeting of civilians. Chief among these were arguments that the civilians were really insurgents or they were supporting the rebel/government forces. With reference to Mao Tse-tung's classic guerrilla warfare analogy, it was sometimes necessary to target civilians in order to drain the water in which the guerrilla fishes were swimming. Again, some of the operations conducted by Nigeria's military and the Civilian Joint Task Force against suspected Boko Haram sympathizers in the northeast of the country fall into this category.[85]

A third set of explanations related to the symbolic and political functions of what de Waal has called ‘conspicuous atrocity’.[86] Here, the point was not just to commit atrocities but to do so conspicuously because of the fear and hence obedience it might generate. This helps explain why some acts were recorded and disseminated to amplify the perpetrator's power or to sow fear among the wider populace. In Liberia, for example, Charles Taylor's threats of a ‘carnival of blood’ helped him gain significant military advantage, and Prince Johnson's dissemination of the videotape of him and his colleagues torturing and killing President Samuel Doe undoubtedly enhanced his

prestige as a warlord.[87] The lengthy videos of specific battles and massacres produced by the *Al-Kataib* Foundation, a propaganda arm of *al-Shabaab*, took such efforts to new levels of technological sophistication. They also claimed that it was only non-believers that should fear *al-Shabaab*'s fighters, whereas in reality most of *al-Shabaab*'s victims were fellow Muslims.[88] This type of atrocity also sometimes involved inflicting certain injuries upon captives but letting some of them go free, so that they might tell others of their ordeal and hence encourage people to run away before the perpetrators arrived at the settlement in question, or, if they remained, quickly give into their demands. The use of public rape and sexual violence, particularly in ways that inverted traditional social hierarchies and customs, was often part of such strategies. In addition, where armed factions relied on coercion to gather new members, getting new recruits to participate in such atrocities could play a role in cementing their loyalty to the group for fear of facing retribution by outsiders.

The relatively widespread use of these methods of warfare caused many local civilians to flee their homes in fear of what might happen if they stayed. As a result, Africa's wars triggered huge levels of displacement; around 2010, for instance, Africa accounted for approximately half of all the world's forcibly displaced people, while by May 2015 there were some 11.4 million internally displaced people in sub-Saharan Africa alone.[89] This had terrible effects, because it is widely thought to be the single most important factor in whether a person succumbs to disease or the effects of malnutrition. Among the major epicentres of displacement were the conflicts in Sudan, the DRC, Uganda and Somalia. In the best-case scenario, the displaced might find sanctuary. Unfortunately, the more common destination was a displacement camp, often administered by foreign governments or international agencies. Precisely because such camps attracted foreigners with a relative abundance of resources, such as peacekeepers or humanitarian workers, they also attracted belligerents looking to refuel their war efforts and recruit new supporters, or simply for a place to organize (see chapter 11). Indeed, insurgencies such as the SPLA in Sudan, POLISARIO in Western Sahara, and the soldiers and militias of Rwanda's genocidal regime became adept at utilizing such camps for strategic purposes.[90]

Indiscriminate violence

Particularly since the *al-Qa'ida* attacks on Washington, DC and New York City on 11 September 2001, increased attention has focused on trends and patterns in 'terrorist attacks' around the world. Africa is no exception. This has generated a range of indices purporting to track such incidents. Two such indices, the University of Maryland's Global Terrorism Database and Vision of Humanity's Global Terrorism Index, consistently report parts of Africa to be among the world's most afflicted areas.[91] Yet both indices are inherently problematic because of the way in which they limit their definition of terrorism to acts committed by non-state actors.[92] If terrorism is about the use of indiscriminate violence to intimidate populations in pursuit of political aims, then it is clear that in large parts of Africa, governments, not non-state actors, have been the principal perpetrators. In extreme cases, such as contemporary Eritrea, the incumbent regime retains its power through a sophisticated edifice of institutions and policies designed to terrorize its population on a daily basis.[93] It is therefore 'illogical and unjustifiable to exclude states and their agents from the language of terror, terrorism, and terrorist'.[94] But since no comprehensive datasets exist that follow this advice, I will instead summarize recent trends in other forms of indiscriminate violence across Africa.

Particularly over the last decade, African battlefields have witnessed an increase in what the ACLED refers to as 'remote violence', wherein 'a conflict actor engages another group while remaining spatially removed from the area of attack'. Remote violence occurs through such instruments as IEDs, air strikes, rocket attacks and bombs. While southern Sudan accounted for the majority of this type of violence at the turn of the millennium, since the late 2000s, the main theatres were in Somalia, Nigeria, Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Mali as well as Sudan. Across Africa as a whole remote violence increased dramatically in the last decade. In 2005, it accounted for only 0.95 per cent of conflict events recorded by the ACLED. But by 2014 this figure had jumped to 8.93 per cent. ACLED researchers concluded this large increase was due to the aftermath of the Arab uprisings across northern Africa and the rise of political militias across the continent more broadly. While remote violence was used to target both government forces and civilians, ACLED noted the tendency of political

militias to defer to these tactics as they become weakened in a conventional military sense.[95]

Suicide operations were another increasingly prevalent form of indiscriminate violence across Africa. This term refers to instances ‘where the attackers involved intend to deploy themselves as a weapon – in the full expectation that they will be killed – in the execution of a deliberate attack against people and/or property to cause harm.’[96] Between 1998 and 2011, Anneli Botha recorded over 100 suicide operations in twelve African states: Algeria, Egypt, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda. The top three perpetrators of suicide operations were *al-Shabaab*, AQIM and Boko Haram. Although there is no single profile of a suicide attacker, in African cases most of them were male, in their late teens/early twenties, and from less affluent backgrounds but with widely varying levels of education. Since 2011, suicide operations in Africa have become much more frequent and widespread, numbering around 200 between 2012 and 2015, and including incidents in Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti and Mali.[97]

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that a focus on state–society complexes operating across different levels of analysis provides a useful way of thinking about Africa's warscapes and the political terrain on which they were played out. It argued that there are several major reasons why things turned out this way. Chief among them was the way in which regimes in many of the continent's weak states prioritized their survival over pursuing genuinely national development and were quite willing to use violence to deal with any serious challengers. The regular use of violence and its connection to political power and economic advancement also served to saturate large swathes of the continent in militaristic ideas.[98] Ironically, the fact that the leaders of these regimes were often most worried about internal threats to their status meant that they rarely built effective, professional and well-equipped armed forces for fear that such troops might turn against them. Instead, their personal security was pursued by creating large palaces and some sort of privately controlled presidential guard. One consequence was that this regularly left more peripheral areas of their country unable to fend

off even small rebellions and exposed the civilian population to unruly and unpaid soldiers.

A second key issue was the search for resources. In a geopolitical context where patronage from the Cold War superpowers quickly dried up, regimes and rebels alike needed to find other sources of revenue. One option utilized by both governments and insurgent leaders was to let their armed forces pay themselves by plundering the civilian population. Another was to focus their energies on the economically valuable areas of the country and farm out the other areas either to local strongmen or no one at all. In areas where civilians faced the prospect of regular encounters with armed rebels or government soldiers, it was not surprising that many of them chose to run away, even if it meant leaving their home and source of livelihood. Fortunately, for the combatants in Africa's wars, there was often a variety of international actors, from peacekeepers to humanitarian workers, most of whom brought useful resources with them. And, as the years wore on, rebels and government troops across the continent realized that there were often few severe penalties for plundering these ‘external’ resources: whether vehicles, weapons and ammunition from peacekeepers, or food and medical supplies from humanitarian agencies.

External actors were also emblematic of the third main explanation for Africa's terrain of struggle: the intensifying interconnections available to belligerents through all sorts of cross-border networks, institutions and processes. Tapping into the global economy, diaspora networks or regional/global allies thus became the modus operandi for regimes and rebels alike. Whether this was to purchase weapons, attract political support or acquire some of the essential gadgets of twenty-first-century conflict, such as a Thuraya satellite phone or a Toyota Hilux land cruiser, Africa's conflicts were transnationalized. Importantly, however, they retained their local roots and idiosyncrasies. Understanding the key ingredients which went into these unique war recipes is the challenge that occupies part II of this book.

Notes

1 Barkawi, *Globalization and War*, p. xiii.

2 Howard, *War in European History*, p. xi.

3 See, for example, Richards, *No Peace*.

4 Nordstrom, *Shadows of War*, pp. 46, 53.

5 Jackson, ‘Africa's Wars’, p. 25.

6 See Cox with Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*. Cox defines historical structures broadly as ‘a particular configuration of forces’, while the essence of state–society complexes is that states are always embedded in society, which is why different forms of state emerge in different parts of the world. Within any given historical structure, Cox argued, there are three broad categories of forces (expressed as potentials) that interact: material capabilities, ideas and institutions. Material capabilities are productive and destructive potentials that exist in their dynamic form as technological and organizational capabilities and in their accumulated forms as natural resources which technology can transform, as stocks of equipment, and as the wealth which can command these. Ideas come in broadly two forms: (1) intersubjective meanings – that is, broadly shared notions about the nature of social relations; and (2) collective images of a social order held by different groups of people. Institutions are particular amalgams of ideas and material capabilities which in turn influence the development of ideas and capabilities.

7 Chazan et al., *Politics and Society*, p. 23.

8 Bøås, ‘Marginalized youth’, p. 40.

9 The classic statements are Singer, ‘The level-of-analysis problem’; Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*.

10 Buzan, ‘The level of analysis problem’, p. 204.

11 Ibid., p. 199.

12 Wight, *Agents*, p. 105.

13 In this sense, I agree with Bøås and Dunn, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

14 Wight, *Agents*, p. 111.

15 Kassimir and Latham, ‘Toward a new research agenda’, p. 270.

16 See Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, p. 33. Other analysts have made similar points. Barry Buzan wrote about the ‘seamless web’ of real life to emphasize that the levels were heuristic devices rather than accurate reflections of reality. Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 187–8. Similarly, Heikki Patomaki argued that analysis should be based on ‘interpenetrating contexts’ rather than separate levels. Patomaki, ‘How to tell better stories’, p. 108.

17 Buzan, ‘The level of analysis problem’, p. 213.

18 See, for example, Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p. 223; Straus, *The Order of Genocide*; Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos*, chap. 5; Autesserre, ‘The trouble with Congo’. This point is not unique to Africa. See Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence*.

19 Østby, Nordås and Rød, ‘Regional inequalities’.

20 See, for example, Peters and Richards, ‘Why we fight’; Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*; Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

21 Buhaug and Rød, ‘Local determinants’.

22 Verwimp, Justino and Brück, ‘The analysis of conflict’; Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*.

23 Bevan, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*; Straus, ‘Wars do End!’.

24 Autesserre, ‘Hobbes and the Congo’, p. 259.

25 See Johnson, *The Root Causes*.

26 Tanner and Tubiana, *Divided They Fall*.

27 Thus, contra Kassimir and Latham, it is not necessarily the case that states remain ‘key players in transboundary formations’ (Kassimir and Latham, ‘Toward a new research agenda’, p. 274).

28 See Herbst, *States and Power*.

29 Clapham, ‘Comments’.

30 Cederman, Wimmer and Min, ‘Why do ethnic groups rebel?’.

31 Goldstone et al., ‘A global forecasting model’ (2010).

32 Reno, ‘Patronage politics’, pp. 328–9. See also Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*.

33 See, for example, Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*.

34 Clapham, *Africa*, p. 20.

35 Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 3.

36 Reno, ‘Patronage politics’, p. 329.

37 Ibid., p. 330.

38 See, for example, Buzan, *People, States and Fear*, pp. 186–229; Lake and Morgan, *Regional Orders*; Hettne, Inotai and Sunkel, *The New Regionalism*; DFID, *The Causes of Conflict*; Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*; Pugh and Cooper with Goodhand, *War Economies*.

39 Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p. 45. See also Bøås and Dunn, ‘African guerrilla politics’, pp. 35–6.

40 See Stedman, ‘Conflict and conciliation’, pp. 245–9, and, more generally, Salehyan, *Rebels without Borders*.

41 Prunier, *Africa's World War*.

42 See Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, chap. 2.

43 Buzan and Wæver, *Regions and Powers*, p. 232.

44 Transnational relations refer to ‘regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization.’ Risse-Kappen, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

45 Saideman, *The Ties*; Lemke, *Regions*.

46 For a discussion of why ethnic conflicts become transnationalized, see Keller, ‘Transnational ethnic conflict’.

47 HRW, *Youth, Poverty and Blood*.

48 Press statement by UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 5–15 October 2009, p. 4.

49 See Bayart, ‘Africa in the world’; Austen, ‘Africa and globalization’.

50 Hironaka, *Neverending Wars*, p. 11. Ideas about global culture have also affected how international peacekeeping missions have responded to Africa's wars. See Paris, ‘Peacekeeping’.

51 Callaghy et al., *Intervention and Transnationalism*.

52 de Waal, *Famine Crimes*; Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*; Duffield, *Global Governance*.

53 For an enlightening analysis of the global nature of the trade in conflict goods emanating from the DRC, see UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation*. Details about all the UN's sanctions committees can be accessed at www.un.org/sc/committees/.

54 UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG, *Experts’ background report*.

55 See, for example, Combating Terrorism Center, *Al-Qa'ida's (Mis)Adventures*.

56 Dowd, *Violent Islamist Groups*.

57 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, p. 12.

58 Clausewitz, *On War*, p. 87.

59 Peters and Richards, ‘Understanding’, p. 451.

60 HRW, *Nigeria*; HRW, *Criminal Politics*, p. 18.

61 Amnesty International, *Stars on their shoulders*.

62 Geneva Declaration, *Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015*, http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-

armed-violence/gbav-2015/interactive-map-charts.html.

63 Author's interviews, MONUSCO officials, Goma, June 2015.

64 Cited in the documentary *Liberia: Murder of a Country* (VBS Television, 1995).

65 Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*.

66 This was also true for Africa's entire period of independence. See Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*.

67 Reno, *Warlord Politics*, pp. 139, 35.

68 de Waal, ‘Contemporary warfare’, pp. 291–2.

69 See Clapham, *African Guerrillas*; Bøås and Dunn, *African Guerrillas*; and Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*.

70 Salehyan, *Rebels without Borders*.

71 Clapham, ‘Degrees of statehood’, p. 153.

72 Ellis, *The Mask*, pp. 90–1.

73 Ibid., p. 14.

74 Mampilly, *Rebel Rulers*, pp. 61, 50. See also Reno, ‘The Sudan rebel perspective’.

75 Clapham, ‘Degrees of statehood’, p. 157.

76 Keen, ‘War and peace’.

77 de Waal, *The Real Politics*, p. 3.

78 See Johnston, ‘The geography’.

79 Dowden, *Africa*, pp. 185, 183.

80 Bob, *The Marketing of Rebellion*.

81 Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*.

82 Conibere et al., ‘Appendix 1’.

83 ACLED, ‘Violence against civilians in 2014’, available at: http://www.acleddata.com/violence-against-civilians-in-2014/. Amnesty International reporting suggests the numbers for the Nigerian military are much higher. See Amnesty International, *Stars on their Shoulders*.

84 Between 1989 and 2009, 63 per cent (26 of 41) of the active conflicts in Africa reported at least one year at either of the highest two prevalence levels of sexual violence compared to 39 per cent in Asia and 26 per cent in Europe. Cohen and Nordås, ‘Sexual violence’, p. 423.

85 Amnesty International, *Stars on their shoulders*.

86 de Waal, ‘Contemporary warfare’, pp. 314–15.

87 See Utas, ‘War, violence and videotapes’.

88 See, for example, ‘Mpeketoni: reclaiming back Muslims lands under Kenyan occupation’, video released March 2015.

89 See Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, at http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-figures

90 For the view that unprotected camps for the displaced are ‘the primary determinant of child soldier recruitment rates’, see Achvarina and Reich, ‘No place to hide’.

91 Available at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/ and http://www.visionofhumanity.org/#/page/indexes/terrorism-index, respectively.

92 More precisely, they define terrorism as ‘the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.’ See http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/using-gtd/.

93 See *Report of the detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea* (UN doc. A/HRC/29/CRP.1, 5 June 2015).

94 Booth and Dunne, *Terror in Our Time*, p.7.

95 ACLED, ‘Remote Violence in Africa, 1997–2014’, at http://www.acleddata.com/remote-violence-in-2014/.

96 Botha, *Practical Guide*.

97 See Chicago Project on Security and Terrorism's Suicide Attack Database at http://cpost.uchicago.edu/.

98 See de Waal, *Demilitarizing the Mind*.

Part II
Ingredients

Chapter Three
Neopatrimonialism

Since the 1980s, the concept of neopatrimonialism has frequently been used to explain the forms of political domination apparent within African states.[1] Critics, however, argued that the concept was being used in an unclear and ambiguous manner which tended to rob it of any potential analytical utility.[2] This chapter defends the idea that a refined understanding of neopatrimonialism is a vital concept for comprehending the roots of many African conflicts.[3] In particular, it analyses the extent to which a link can be identified between neopatrimonial systems of governance and armed conflict in post-Cold War Africa.

Overall, I argue that neopatrimonial systems of governance do not automatically lead to armed conflict because they can vary considerably, taking more or less severe forms, and because some rulers have been adept at managing factionalized politics and effectively stifling the opportunities for rebellion. Nevertheless, the factionalization of society that neopatrimonialism inevitably produces leaves them at a significant risk of instability. This system of governance should therefore be understood as an important underlying factor that enhances the risk of armed conflict but does not necessarily mean warfare is inevitable. The risks were especially acute when neopatrimonial systems experienced a crisis which the ruling authorities were unable to contain. Such crises tended to occur when external resources (financial or political) dried up, when outrageous behaviour tested the limits of the system's legitimacy, or when other factors developed that made armed rebellion feasible for marginalized segments of the population. As William Reno concluded, the ‘critical juncture’ appeared when rulers were ‘no longer able to assert their dominance over local strongmen in their patronage network’. At that point, armed groups were utilized ‘for their own commercial and political benefit without the ruler's authorization’.[4]

To explore these issues, the chapter proceeds in three main parts. It begins by outlining the central characteristics of neopatrimonial systems of

governance. These can be understood as state–society complexes where the machinery of the modern bureaucratic state is infused with traditional ideas about patronage and clientalism. Understanding how power operates in neopatrimonial systems helps us understand the local roots of many of Africa's wars. The second section discusses two pathways through which neopatrimonial regimes were linked to armed conflict in post-Cold War Africa: periods of economic and political crisis and the challenges thrown up by democratization. The final section uses the case study of Sierra Leone to explore how neopatrimonial structures eventually collapsed under a variety of political and economic crises, resulting in a decade-long and bloody civil war.

Neopatrimonialism: A Brief Aetiology

Neopatrimonial regimes are hybrid, uncertain, unstable and usually authoritarian systems of governance. They are a hybrid mix of legal-rational bureaucracy and personalized systems of power involving clientalism and patronage.[5] They produce a significant degree of uncertainty over which of these two systems will dictate the decision-making process in any given situation. These regimes encourage the factionalization of society and tend to exhibit authoritarian tendencies inasmuch as the institutions of state are regularly used to sustain patrons and supporters and weaken political opponents. Political order in neopatrimonial systems is therefore inherently unstable because it rests on threats of retribution against opponents rather than general satisfaction with the status quo.[6] None of these characteristics are absolutes; they are matters of degree along a spectrum. As one analyst put it, although Houphouët-Boigny's neopatrimonialism in Côte d'Ivoire clearly had its drawbacks, it was ‘infinitely preferable’ to Idi Amin's version in Uganda.[7] Within neopatrimonial regimes the most senior elites are engaged in a constant balancing act to ensure stability and thereby preserve their status. Periods of crisis threaten this often delicate balance.

The number of neopatrimonial regimes in post-Cold War Africa is a source of some debate. Some analysts argued that ‘neo-patrimonialism is virtually the only workable mode of governance in tropical Africa’ and ‘is the *core* feature of politics in Africa’.[8] Similarly, writing in the late 1990s, Chabal and Daloz argued that it was plausible to claim that every state in black

Africa except South Africa suffered from at least some form of neopatrimonialism because they lacked a professional and uncorrupted civil service – one where kinship ties or communal loyalty to ruling elites did not count for more than qualifications or professional competence.[9] Other analysts have discussed cases where patrimonial logic did not dominate government, including the *dergue* in Ethiopia, the military executives which at various times ran Niger, Mali and Ghana, and Botswana and Gambia (pre-1994), both of which were offered as examples of pluralist politics where the presidents frequently acted as if there were some real constitutional constraints on their power.[10]

For the purposes of this chapter, I assume that neopatrimonial rule was a widespread though not necessarily universal phenomenon and that it was particularly pronounced in many of the African countries which experienced armed conflict after 1990.

With these points in mind, it is important to flesh out the ideas of hybridity, uncertainty and instability in a bit more detail. In contrast to traditional patrimonial systems, where the personal whims of the ruler dictated state policy regardless of formal bureaucratic rules and procedures, *neo*patrimonial systems are commonly understood as a hybrid mix of personalized and bureaucratic logics of governance. As Clapham argued, neopatrimonialism was ‘a form of organisation in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational-legal lines. Officials hold positions in bureaucratic organisations with powers which are formally defined, but exercise those powers … as a form … of private property.’[11] In other words, these were hybrid systems, but it was the ruler's personal interests that called the shots inasmuch as formal bureaucratic procedures would rarely be allowed to stand in the way of the wishes of the president and senior political elites. Nicolas van de Walle made a similar point when he suggested that ‘African political systems became *neopatrimonial*’ when ‘an external façade of modern rational-legal administration’ co-existed ‘with an internal patrimonial logic of dyadic exchange, prebendalism, and the private appropriation of public resources by state elites’.[12] He also made the important observation that the system of modern rational-legal administration at the national level was not hermetically sealed off from international forces. Rather, what he called ‘the international development

business' – which included international financial institutions and various transnational corporations as well as development and humanitarian NGOs – also played an important part in setting the system's rules (see chapter 11).

However, as Erdmann and Engel have argued, the idea that the rational-legal administration was simply a 'façade' behind which personal rule dominates arguably overstates the dominance of personal interests, or at least in many cases hides a more complicated reality. For them, it was not always the case that when personalized and bureaucratic systems of governance met the former automatically prevailed over the latter; rather the outcome often depended on the issue in question, particularly the extent to which it was perceived as being connected to issues of regime security and survival. Consequently, they suggested that neopatrimonial systems accepted the distinction between the public and private realms, at least formally, and public reference could be made to this distinction.[13] In sum, the two spheres of patrimonial and rational-legal relations not only coexist but 'permeate each other'. Erdmann and Engel therefore defined neopatrimonialism as 'a type of political domination which is characterised by *insecurity* about the behaviour and role of state institutions (and agents)'. This insecurity structures the reproduction of the system inasmuch as actions of state institutions or by state agents are not calculable; formal state institutions cannot fulfil their universalistic purpose for public welfare, which is instead decided by particularistic interests and orientations; and political informality has reached such proportions that one can even speak of institutionalized informality.

The upshot of their analysis was that, while Africa's post-Cold War political leaders regularly deviated from their official bureaucratic roles, there were also situations in which political elites – even quite senior ones – did follow rational-legal procedures. Of course, this was most likely to occur when the formal rules coincided with elite interests. Thus, as Goran Hyden put it, 'political leaders in Africa have had a very instrumental view of constitutions and formal institutions, treating them seriously only when it has suited them.'[14] While this was certainly true on many occasions, there were also times when elites were not able to ignore completely rational-legal constraints. Good cases in point were the Nigerian Senate's May 2006 decision to reject a bill which would have permitted President Olusegun Obasanjo to secure himself a third presidential term, and the failure of

President Blaise Compaoré's efforts to modify limits on his term in 2014 in the face of public protests.

At a more general level, it is also notable that, in twenty-first-century Africa, 'the formal rules of the game are beginning to matter in ways that they previously have not.'[15] Between 1990 and 2005, for example, eighteen African presidents reached the two-term limit imposed on their presidency by their state's constitution.[16] Of these, nine left office and nine tried to change the constitution in order to extend their terms: three of them failed and six succeeded.[17] While the fact that six presidents succeeded in bending the rational-legal system to fit their own preferences suggests that some states still resemble personal fiefdoms, it is also notable that

> Each of these leaders was probably strong enough to have voided his country's constitution and declared himself president for life, as many previous African leaders once did. Yet each of these more recent presidents felt the need to spend considerable political and financial capital trying to secure the votes to change the constitution – a feeling that in itself shows how heavily the formal rules have come to weigh.[18]

Since 2005, similar debates have taken place across parts of Africa. The results have been mixed. In four countries, attempts by incumbent presidents to modify or eliminate term limits in their respective constitutions failed: Burkina Faso (2014), Niger (2009), Nigeria (2006) and Senegal (2012). On the other hand, in three countries incumbent presidents were able to successfully modify or eliminate their term limits: President Paul Biya (Cameroon, 2008), President Ismail Guelleh (Djibouti, 2010), and President Pierre Nkurunziza (Burundi, 2015). In Cameroon and Djibouti, opposition was sufficiently stifled to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict. In Burundi, the outcome remains unclear at the time of writing. There is thus reasonably compelling evidence to suggest that rulers of neopatrimonial regimes faced increasing challenges to their ability simply to dictate political outcomes. Yet it is also true that these challenges were not nearly so pronounced in the early 1990s as they were by the twenty-first century.

Returning to the theme of uncertainty, important practical and analytical questions still remain: Why and when will political leaders deviate from their legal-rational roles? How far will they deviate? And, to what extent is

it possible to predict and avert such behaviour? It is because the behaviour of Africa's state elites could not be predicted with a great degree of accuracy that uncertainty should be considered a central characteristic of neopatrimonial systems.

But even uncertainty has its limits. First, more senior political elites were more likely to overrule the official bureaucratic procedures. Hence, while presidents got their way far more often than not, officials lower down the pecking order might not be able to break the bureaucratic rules quite so easily or so frequently. Second, in cases of national (or, more accurately, regime) security, bureaucratic procedures were more likely to be cast aside in the interests of regime survival.

Moreover, uncertainty had its uses for certain well-placed actors. Chabal and Daloz coined the phrase ‘the political instrumentalization of disorder’ to describe ‘the process by which political actors in Africa seek to maximize their returns on the state of confusion, uncertainty, and sometimes even chaos, which characterizes most African polities.’ This ‘condition’ thus offered significant ‘opportunities for those who know how to play the system’.[19] Specifically, it allowed them to respond to the demands for protection, assistance and aid made by their constituents in exchange for the recognition of the political prominence and social status which, as patrons, they craved. The instrumentalization of the prevailing political (dis)order thus served as a disincentive to develop a more properly institutionalized rational-legal state. This, in turn, often had repercussions for the regime's ability to suppress rebellion.

The final two elements in my understanding of neopatrimonial systems relate to authoritarianism and political instability. For some analysts, ‘neo-patrimonialism corresponds with authoritarian politics’.[20] This is relevant for analysing armed conflicts because recent quantitative analysis suggests that ‘civil wars tend to occur within more authoritarian states’.[21] Others, however, take a slightly less draconian line, arguing that ‘there is nothing in patrimonialism that leads directly to any one regime type, and there is nothing inherent in patrimonialism to prevent the creation of a democracy by leaders determined to do so.’[22] While I believe neopatrimonial rule is likely to encourage authoritarian tendencies, there is, as noted above, an important question of degree but also a substantive difference. On the latter,

Paul Richards has made a persuasive argument, derived from his studies of Sierra Leone, that the central 'bad' point of neopatrimonial rule is the 'chronic tendency towards factionalization between those who "enjoy" and those who feel excluded'.[23] In this sense, neopatrimonialism does not automatically equate to dictatorship, but it does divide societies and render the subsequent divisions increasingly important in political, economic and social terms.

The essence of this politics of division was captured most eloquently by the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, who used his country as a backdrop to describe the essential dynamics of post-independence politics in the following manner:

> A man who has just come in from the rain and dried his body and put on dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time. The trouble with our new nation was that none of us had been indoors long enough to be able to say 'to hell with it'. We had all been in the rain together until yesterday. Then a handful of us – the smart, and the lucky and hardly ever the best – had scrambled for the one shelter our former rulers left, and had taken it over and barricaded themselves in. And from within they sought to persuade the rest through numerous loudspeakers, that the first phase of the struggle had been won and that the next phase – the expansion of our house – was even more important and called for new and original tactics; it required all argument to cease and the whole people to speak with one voice and that any more dissent and argument outside the door of the shelter would subvert and bring down the whole house.[24]

Over forty years later, Richard Dowden correctly observed: 'Most Africans have been in the rain ever since. In most African countries the elite grabbed the postcolonial state for themselves and boarded it up against the people. They embraced all the oppressive colonial laws and changed very little except the size of their bank accounts.'[25]

Those at the top end of neopatrimonial regimes thus faced a constant political balancing act to manage the divide between those inside the house and those still stuck in the rain. This was usually done via various strategies of elite co-optation or accommodation.[26] As Kenneth Omeje has described it,

> Elite co-optation is one method of conflict regulation and settlement that many neo-patrimonial states in Africa use effectively to weaken opposition and rebuild a form of consensus aimed at more or less preserving and perpetuating the status quo. By elite co-optation African political regimes aim to placate, disorganize, silence or weaken salient pressure groups by luring vocal and influential members of the groups into the ruling circle with offers of strategic appointments, government contracts and other tangible benefits designed to incorporate them into the state patronage network. In turn, the co-opted activists are expected to mellow their antagonism against the state and possibly also appeal to their members to follow suit.[27]

When carried out successfully, this strategy caused the size of the incumbent party and its supporters to inflate. In such circumstances, it was difficult for individuals to oppose the ruling party effectively from the outside. Not only would incumbents tend to deploy the institutions of state to their own advantage to discredit and weaken opponents, but in countries without a tradition of electoral democracy it was often difficult to get people to reject their current leaders. As one commentator wryly noted, 'Opposition candidates in Africa are frequently told, "I will vote for you when you are President." '[28] In addition, opposition leaders were often treated with great suspicion, as one rather humorous example illustrates. In 1991 Neil Kinnock, leader of the British Labour Party, then in opposition, was touring southern Africa when bad weather forced his plane to land in Zimbabwe at a small airstrip in the bush. When he proudly announced he was leader of the opposition in Britain, the local authorities arrested him, thinking they had caught an important terrorist.[29]

The main point here is that the logic of neopatrimonialism was not simply forced upon completely unwilling societies by a tiny elite; rather, this mode of governance had a degree of legitimacy which reflected certain widely held assumptions about the purpose of political power and leadership. As Robert Bates has observed, the lack of adherence to rational-legal rules in neopatrimonial regimes was not only supported by those at the top of the political food chain; it also had supporters nearer the bottom end. Here, 'constituents viewed politicians as their agents whose job it was to bring material benefits to the local community – jobs, loans, or cash.'[30] After all, in neopatrimonial systems, the 'truly destitute are those without patrons'.[31]

From the perspective of the politicians at the top, their primary purpose was to ‘distribute benefits in a way designed to return [themselves] to office, while preserving as large a portion as possible for their own consumption’.[32] As one Zambian minister opined, ‘If I don't appoint people from my own region, who else will?’[33] This sentiment also spilled over into situations of armed conflict where, drawing on evidence from West Africa's wars, Reno concluded that the primary goal of insurgents was ‘to force their way into the social system from which they are excluded, not to overthrow it’.[34]

Changes in Africa's political leaders thus tended to occur when either the incumbent died or the baton was passed to a handpicked successor. To challenge a ruling party – even at the polls – was thus usually to invite a considerable level of personal risk with little chance of winning. In Hyden's words, ‘being part of the political opposition’ was generally considered ‘a losing strategy’.[35] And because the state's resources were likely to be deployed almost entirely to bolster the incumbent, would-be challengers were often forced to rely on personal finances or foreign support; the latter in particular would fuel local suspicion about who was really calling the shots. Moreover, in the early 1990s major Western donors declared a new-found respect for multi-party democracy. More and more African governments thus found it useful to declare that they had held and won general elections against some form of opposition. However, as Posner and Young correctly note, ‘Permitting a challenger to run … is not the same thing as putting oneself at real risk of losing power.’[36] Most elections thus tended to return the ruling party to power.

In some cases, this electoral impasse did produce violence. Using a novel dataset involving 221 cases of elections in sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 2008, Scott Straus and Charlie Taylor found that the most serious incidents of widespread electoral violence were rare, occurring in only about 10 per cent of African cases, including Angola (1992), DRC (2006), Ethiopia (2005), Nigeria (2003 and 2007), Togo (2005) and Zimbabwe (2008). But they also noted that nearly the same proportion of electoral periods witnessed ‘repressive violence involving targeted assassinations and long-term high-level detentions combined with occasional cases of torture’.[37] These included cases such as Burundi (2005), Equatorial Guinea (2004), Sudan (2000), Tanzania (2000), Togo (2003), Uganda (2006) and

Zimbabwe (2005). Putting these two types of cases together, they found that approximately 20 per cent of electoral contests in Africa between 1990 and 2008 involved electoral violence. These violent electoral cycles were spread fairly evenly across the post-Cold War period. Most of the violence tended to take place before the polling, and it was usually committed by the incumbent regime.

To summarize, neopatrimonial regimes can be thought of as hybrid blends of bureaucratic and informal politics characterized by a significant degree of uncertainty and factionalization. Although this type of political order is inherently unstable, with the right strategies and tactics it can be managed effectively for considerable periods, as demonstrated by Mobutu's rule in Zaire (1965–97), Denis Sassou Nguesso's rule in Congo-Brazzaville (1979–92) or Omar Bongo's rule in Gabon (1969–2009). It is at its most unstable in times of crisis, especially when faced with a segment of the population that is both marginalized and organized. It is in these circumstances that the likelihood of armed conflict increases.

Neopatrimonial Pathways to Violence

How might neopatrimonial systems of governance raise the risk of armed conflict? This section explores two possible pathways to violence, associated with periods of economic and political crisis and the challenges posed by democratization, respectively. It is followed by a short case study of how neopatrimonial rule was implicated in the war in Sierra Leone (1991–2002).

Times of crisis

As discussed above, it was hardly surprising that the most common approach to achieving economic or political advancement within neopatrimonial states was to seek entry into ‘the house’/incumbent party. However, when the door was kept firmly closed or the house became so decrepit that it was in danger of collapsing completely, neopatrimonial regimes were likely to face a political or economic crisis, respectively. Sometimes the incumbent regimes managed them effectively; on other occasions they did not.

One pathway to armed conflict followed the onset of a serious economic crisis which weakened the regime's ability to satisfy its supporters. While African leaders were often guilty of spending relatively vast sums of money on personal or ‘white elephant’ projects such as stadiums, palaces, private jets or lavish conferences, arguably the more serious problem for neopatrimonial rulers was that the unavoidable balancing act of elite co-optation encouraged them to adopt policies which increased the likelihood that their state would suffer an economic crisis. As van de Walle has documented in considerable detail, between 1979 and 1999 ‘economic policy decisions in Africa can be understood as resulting from the combination of the state's neopatrimonial tendencies, its low capacities [especially trained administrative personnel], and its ideological biases, and the negative synergies among these three factors that evolved over time following independence’.[38]

Robert Bates made a similar point when he noted that, in the late twentieth century, many African governments became ‘control regimes’ which pursued policies that promoted a closed economy, distorted key prices in the macroeconomy, and heavily regulated industries and markets, all to further the short-term interests of the incumbent elites.[39] The results were disastrous, especially for many of Africa's farmers. They intensified divisions between urban elites and the rural masses and between different regions within the state. In some cases, these divisions would later provide fertile soil for would-be insurgents to recruit supporters. The choices made by these control regimes also triggered a cycle of decline: as public revenues dwindled, so public sector salaries eroded, and with them the quality of public services. It wasn't long before teachers, nurses, police and other civil servants abandoned their posts or turned to corruption or private trade in search of income. The most immediate problem for political order, however, came when the state's soldiers began to pay themselves.

Sometimes, this self-induced trauma was exacerbated by pressures from external actors, especially what van de Walle labelled the ‘international development business’ (see above and chapter 11). In this scenario, an economic crisis could be triggered if external partners or donors suspended crucial sources of revenue. In Liberia, for example, Charles Taylor's rebellion in late 1989 was precipitated by the US government's decision that the incumbent regime led by Samuel Doe was too corrupt and uninterested

in reform to warrant further support. In this situation, the social glue that held the ruling coalition together started to dissolve and, as fewer and fewer resources trickled down to the ordinary population, the ruling coalition's legitimacy eroded, thereby increasing the likelihood of violent revolt from below.[40] Bratton and van de Walle summed up the situation nicely: ‘shrinking economic opportunities and exclusionary rewards are a volatile recipe for social unrest.’[41]

But it is important to note that, although an economic crisis might trigger a conflict and/or regime change, it did not necessarily signal wholesale rejection of the idea of neopatrimonialism by the new elites or the population at large. As Chabal and Daloz observed, ‘it is the decline in the resources available for patronage rather than dissatisfaction with the patrimonial order *per se* which has undermined the legitimacy of political elites on the continent’.[42] In other words, although the personalities at the top may change – from Doe to Taylor, Mobutu to Kabila, Stevens to Momoh, Moi to Kibaki to Kenyatta, Obasanjo to Yar'Adua, etc. – politics within these states remained ‘grounded in a logic of clientelistic reciprocity’. This constituted ‘very strong evidence that a certain notion of leadership remain[ed] fundamental in Africa’.[43]

It was precisely this zero-sum notion of leadership that encouraged political crises, because segments of the population were left angry and marginalized. Anger could stem from multiple sources, including a sense of relative deprivation or a ruler's willingness to engage in excessive behaviour which went well beyond traditionally acceptable (social and/or political) limits and hence undermined their own legitimacy.[44] Frustration could also build when people were denied the ability to influence political processes that affected them. In this sense, the tendency of most neopatrimonial regimes to suffocate legitimate political opposition, either through the use of direct coercion or by controlling other institutions such as the judiciary and/or the media, was not helpful.

Take the case of Meles Zenawi's Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) government. For many years this was widely touted by Western governments as a model for Africa's renaissance, exemplified by the fact that Meles was one of only two sitting African heads of state invited to form part of Tony Blair's Commission for Africa

during 2004 and 2005.[45] Yet, just two months after the Commission released its report, Ethiopia's national elections were mired in controversy, and nearly two hundred people who protested against the results were killed by government security forces in the streets of Addis Ababa. Across the country an additional 30,000 people were arrested or detained, and the so-called 111 high-level detainees were charged with many offences, including treason and genocide. The parliamentary commission of inquiry which investigated this episode concluded that the actions of the security forces had been ‘legal and necessary’.[46] Writing later that year, Christopher Clapham noted how the local population was left with few legitimate avenues to challenge the ruling government peacefully. ‘People who opposed the government for whatever reason’, he observed, ‘have had no options beyond passive obedience, covert subversion under a guise of acceptance, or outright revolt.’ This was primarily because the EPRDF had ‘shown no inclination at all to accept any compromise or power-sharing solution, even though this has been proposed by the opposition’.[47] While the EPRDF regime was never seriously in danger of being toppled militarily, insurgencies emerged in several parts of the country, most notably perhaps in the form of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) (see also chapter 5).

Following the 2005 elections, the EPRDF tightened its grip on power and massively expanded its membership base across the country from the local *kebele* level upwards. So much so that it became virtually impossible to make one's way in society without being a member. As a consequence, nothing was left to chance during Ethiopia's elections in 2010 and 2015. They were, as one analyst put it, ‘a foregone conclusion’. In 2010, the EPRDF secured 99.6 per cent – or all but two – of the seats in parliament. One went to the opposition and the other to an EPRDF-friendly independent candidate.[48] In 2015, the opposition lost even this foothold as the EPRDF secured 100 per cent of the parliamentary seats. For Ethiopians, such elections provide no meaningful opportunity for expression or genuine participation. But for the incumbent regime they play a key role for the ‘party to demonstrate its domination’.[49] Perhaps more fundamentally, the results leave Ethiopians with few, if any, legitimate political avenues to challenge the ruling government peacefully.

This trend was not only visible in Ethiopia. Arguably the three most important academic studies of African insurgencies (published in 1998, 2007 and 2011) reached similar conclusions about the origins of the continent's guerrilla movements. For Clapham, they derived ‘basically from blocked political aspirations, and in some cases also from reactive desperation’.[50] Similarly, the editors of the more recent volume concluded that African guerrillas were best thought of ‘as manifestations of a rage against the “machinery” of the dysfunctional neopatrimonial state’.[51] In essence, they argued, these insurgencies stemmed from common experiences rooted in the excesses of corruption, violence, poverty and marginalization that occurred within the continent's most dysfunctional neopatrimonial states.[52] Within this overall context, regimes which created large pools of disaffected youth and left them with few ‘means of achieving status or material improvement’ were thought to be particularly susceptible to violent rebellion.[53] For Will Reno, author of the third key study of rebellions in Africa, the very essence of what it meant to be a rebel was to ‘challenge the authority of Africa's state regimes’. Hence, insurgencies were always reflections of ‘the political order against which they fight’.[54] In these struggles, Reno concluded, the ‘central feature that emerges … is the growing centrality of patronage politics, both in the elite coalitions that rule the state and in the armed groups that oppose rulers’. The major objective for the majority of armed groups can thus be understood as controlling ‘the resources and commercial networks that sustain patron-client systems of authority’.[55] These qualitative studies lend additional support to the quantitative evidence, noted above, which suggested civil wars tend to occur in more authoritarian states.

Of course, if neopatrimonial regimes could manage political opponents effectively and keep potential insurgents in check, they could endure for decades. To do this, rulers needed to ensure that sufficient resources trickled down to their clients to keep the majority satisfied. In this sense, the legitimacy of elites in neopatrimonial systems was tied to ‘their ability to nourish the clientele on which their power rests’. In practice, this usually meant using the state's resources for patrimonial purposes.[56] The more their legitimacy eroded, the more dependent they became upon maintaining enough coercive power to scupper any rebellions.

As the post-Cold War historical record demonstrates, however, many African regimes were not very good at preventing rebellions or stopping them once they had started. Part of the explanation lay in the fact that it didn't always take many disgruntled people with guns to form a significant insurgency. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone, for example, started life with fewer than forty fighters, while Charles Taylor's infamous National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) could only muster approximately a hundred soldiers when it invaded Liberia in 1989.[57] A similar story was evident with Joseph Kony's longstanding Lord's Resistance Army, which is thought to have revolved around a core of 300 to 400 stalwarts who shepherded several thousand rank-and-file recruits.[58]

More recent insurgencies have also coalesced around a small core of committed fighters. The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), for instance, began its attacks on Charles Taylor's regime with only seventy fighters.[59] In Sudan, the Darfur Liberation Front (DLF) started its campaign with about 300 troops before it morphed into the subsequently much larger Sudan Liberation Army (SLA).[60] In Algeria, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) was thought to have originated with approximately 700 fighters.[61] About 800 were evident in the early days of the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI).[62] And, although it has engaged in more criminalized activity, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) took on the Nigerian state with fewer than 300 fighters (see chapter 4).[63] Even Africa's largest wars have been driven by relatively small warring parties. In Somalia, for example, *al-Shabaab* began its organizational existence in 2005 with only a core of thirty-three members; yet within a few years grew to administer an area roughly the size of Denmark containing some five million inhabitants.[64] Similarly, the now infamous Boko Haram movement started life in the early 2000s as a small sect of approximately 70 disgruntled (and unarmed) worshippers in Maiduguri in northeast Nigeria, most of whom were killed by security forces in December 2003.[65] Only then did it subsequently morph into a larger more radical organization with a new leader, Mohammed Yusuf, who was killed in police custody in 2009, prompting a further period of increased radicalization among its supporters. And even in the continent's largest war in the DRC, the two main non-state armed groups in the east of the country, the *Congrès national pour la défense du*

peuple (CNDP) and the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), were estimated to control only between 4,000 and 7,000 combatants, respectively.[66]

What these figures reveal is that many major political crises derive from small and hence vulnerable rebel movements. As Jeffrey Herbst has argued, it would therefore have been prudent to deal with them before they became mature insurgencies.[67] The problem was that paranoid African rulers often kept most of their armed forces weak and divided on purpose – usually as part of a broader response to insecurity which entailed ‘the intentional destruction of state institutions in favour of basing political authority on the ability to control markets’.[68] This approach may have reduced the risks of palace coups but it rarely produced effective armies. Consequently, it was not always easy for neopatrimonial authorities to defeat even small rebellions. The parlous state of the armed forces also allowed rebels to exploit the governing regime by encouraging defections within its army or by simply routing ineffective troops. Probably the best example of the latter scenario was the campaign launched by Laurent Kabila's Rwandan- and Ugandan-backed Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo–Zaire (AFDL) in 1996 against Mobutu Sese Seko's government in Zaire. Mobutu's army was so weak that ‘the AFDL mostly saw it running away; the only fighting during the campaign was done by foreigners’ (namely mercenaries, the army of the former Rwandan government and its *Interahamwe* militias, as well as some UNITA rebels from Angola).[69]

Before moving on, it is important to note two further general observations. First, the existence of marginalized groups – even large ones – did not automatically produce an insurgency. For a rebellion to develop, those groups with grievances needed to organize and retain followers, keep them supplied with weapons, and avoid early military defeat. Second, it was rarely the truly destitute who started Africa's insurgencies. Using data collected by the Afrobarometer survey on seven southern African states – Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe – Anthony Leysens concluded that 61.6 per cent of the populations of these states were marginalized in socio-economic terms; 30 per cent existed in a precarious relationship to the mode of production; and 8.4 per cent were integrated into the formal economy.[70] When each group was analysed in terms of its potential for resistance, Leysens found that not only was the

protest potential of the marginalized majority lower than that of the economically integrated but they were also more tolerant of authoritarian forms of government. Consequently, he concluded that 'societies where large parts of the population are poor and marginalised are not necessarily more prone to political instability in the form of protest actions (violent or nonviolent).'[71] In short, it is possible for regimes to face severe political and economic crises and avoid the outbreak of civil war.

The threat of democratization

A second pathway to violence begins when neopatrimonial regimes attempt to democratize. As discussed in chapter 1, the Political Instability Task Force (PITF) examined 141 episodes of instability worldwide during the period 1955–2003 in order to 'identify states that will or will not experience political instability two years hence with over 80% accuracy'.[72] Sub-Saharan Africa was the most unstable region during this period, accounting for forty-nine episodes of instability, or 34.8 per cent of the global total. After assessing 'accumulated data for more than 1,000 variables', the Task Force concluded that 'relatively simple models can identify the factors associated with a broad range of political violence and instability events around the world'.[73] Specifically, 'partial democracies with factionalism' were 'an exceptionally unstable type of regime' and most at risk of severe political instability.[74] As the Task Force concluded,

> by far the worst situation in terms of risks of instability were for a political landscape that combined deeply polarized or factionalized competition with open contestation. The combination of a winner-take-all, parochial approach to politics with opportunities to compete for control of central state authority represents a powder keg for political crisis.[75]

These findings were confirmed in a separate study by other PITF members, which concluded that 'anocracies' – countries whose governments are neither fully democratic nor fully autocratic – 'have been much more vulnerable to new outbreaks of armed societal conflict; they have been about six times more likely than democracies and two and one-half times as likely as autocracies to experience new outbreaks of societal wars.'[76]

The Task Force team defined ‘factionalism’ as occurring ‘when political competition is dominated by ethnic or other parochial groups that regularly compete for political influence in order to promote particularist agendas and favour group members to the detriment of common, secular, or cross-cutting agendas.’[77] Although they do not use the term explicitly, their understanding of partial democracies/anocracies combined with factionalism bears more than a passing resemblance to my definition of neopatrimonial systems. The Task Force did not suggest that partial democracy and factionalist politics are the only significant factors producing severe instability, but they did note that the kinds of patterns of political authority that characterize neopatrimonial regimes are ‘the critical factor’.[78]

On sub-Saharan Africa specifically, the PITF identified five other ingredients which played a significant role ‘in shifting the relative odds of instability’:[79]

- trade openness: states ‘with lower trade openness … had roughly two to three times higher odds of near-term instability than countries with higher openness to trade’;
- state-led (economic or political) discrimination;
- colonial heritage: ‘countries that were not formerly French colonies [have] odds of instability roughly four to thirteen times greater than former French possessions’;
- leaders' years in office: ‘new leaders (less than five years in office) and “entrenched” leaders (those more than fourteen years in office) … faced higher odds of instability than their peers who had been in office from 5–14 years’;
- a state's religious composition: ‘Countries that had a dominant religious majority (over two-thirds of the population identified with the main religious group) were *more* likely to experience instability than countries in which the population was more evenly divided among different religious groups.’

The Task Force's overall conclusion was startling: ‘in our data *every African country that mixed partial democracy with factionalism suffered*

instability.'[80]

In sum, the most likely time for a country to experience severe political instability is when it begins to make the transition from an autocracy to a partial democracy. This was precisely what happened across many parts of the African continent as the Cold War came to an end.[81] Expressed in numerical terms, while, in 1988, 90 per cent of sub-Saharan African states had autocratic governments, by the early twenty-first century that figure had dropped dramatically.[82] Interestingly, the Task Force noted that a rush to establish electoral competition without ensuring 'a system of checks and balances' to constrain 'elected chief executives' was a recipe for generating instability.[83] These are wise words, and the issues they raise are discussed more thoroughly in part III of this book.

The Case of Sierra Leone

The war in Sierra Leone (1991–2002) provides a good example of these pathways in action. Since at least its independence in 1961, the country's politics had been based upon corrupt patrimonial networks that operated across both the formal and the informal economy.[84] William Reno used the phrase 'shadow state' to explain the relationship between corruption and politics in Sierra Leone whereby the power of successive rulers was based upon their ability to control both formal and informal markets rather than upon some concept of popular legitimacy.[85] After 1968 the system of patronage revolved around Siaka Stevens and his All People's Congress (APC). For all intents and purposes, politics in Sierra Leone turned into 'an affair for and by APC members and supporters … that made access to resources impossible for non-members; it made membership of the party a *sine qua non* to get by; exclusion literally meant death by attrition.'[86]

During this process of privatizing power and wealth, Afro-Lebanese businessmen such as Jamil Sahid Mohammed played a crucial intermediary role between the global economy and patrimonial accumulation within the country.[87] Since these Lebanese dealers had few local social networks from which they could challenge Stevens's rule, they were allocated the bulk of diamond mining licences in preference to African dealers. They also had access to international diamond markets and credit networks, particularly in

the Middle East, that helped make collaborative ventures with Stevens a success. During the 1970s and 1980s, however, the state's institutions withered as Stevens became increasingly dependent upon Lebanese management of the economy to provide his supporters with resources.

By the time Stevens's handpicked successor, Joseph Momoh, assumed power in 1985 the country was in crisis.[88] Stevens's patrimonial networks had pocketed increasing portions of the country's primary assets, especially diamonds. By 1987, for instance, taxable revenue generated by alluvial diamond mining was a mere $100,000 compared with over $200 million in 1968.[89] With dwindling state coffers, it wasn't long before the civil service – which by the mid-1980s employed an estimated 100,000 staff – became increasingly demoralized in the face of falling wages and a lack of resources. By 1985, civil servants received only 40 per cent of 1975 salary levels, if they were paid at all.[90] Public expenditure declined from 31 per cent of GDP in 1980–1 to 16 per cent by 1987–8, with development expenditures falling from 4.9 per cent to 2.2 per cent over the same period. The education system – once heralded as making Sierra Leone the ‘Athens’ of West Africa – was also devastated: teachers increasingly refused to teach and students dropped out of school in large numbers. Later, these drop-outs became easy prey for the rebels' anti-establishment rhetoric.[91] In practice, the armed forces came to represent virtually the only visible state institution – and they were neither professional nor effective.[92] By 1989–90 some 2.8 million people (68 per cent of the population) lived in absolute poverty, most of them in the country's rural areas. This number grew with the influx of refugees (equivalent to 5 per cent of the population) from the war in neighbouring Liberia.[93] Indeed, in Sierra Leone's case the political crisis that triggered the war came as a direct result of external forces, most notably the support given to the RUF rebels by Libya's Muammar Gaddafi and Liberia's Charles Taylor. In this sense, the crisis spread as more and more individuals and groups within Sierra Leone took advantage of the rebellion for their own purposes.[94]

Facing the twin challenges of a decrepit set of state institutions and a snow-balling insurgency, Momoh's regime struggled to keep the wheels of patronage turning, and in April 1992 he was overthrown by Captain Valentine Strasser. However, Strasser quickly found himself facing those

same pressures. Meanwhile, the RUF rebels grew stronger, collaborated with a variety of disenchanted army units and forcibly deprived the state of access to its most lucrative resources, diamonds. But it was not only the rebels who benefited from this state of affairs: the RUF incursions also provided the cover for a variety of alienated and excluded groups (including youth, private miners and government soldiers) to participate in trading networks that had previously been dominated by Freetown elites and state officials and to exploit both local civilian and material resources in these areas.[95]

By 1995 the rebels had advanced to within striking distance of the capital, Freetown. Even so, Strasser was unable to divert all state resources to the war effort because his external creditors expected his regime to continue its debt repayments. This made it difficult to build, train, equip and pay an army capable of defeating the RUF. Consequently, in late 1994, Strasser had hired the private military company Gurkha Security Guards Ltd to gain control of resource-rich areas of the country. However, after falling victim to a rebel ambush in which several of its leading figures were killed, the company left Sierra Leone. It was replaced with the South African-based Executive Outcomes, which was much more successful in gaining control of the diamond fields.[96] While this strategy brought Strasser control of some economically important areas, it produced a situation where the commercial success of certain elements within the army and various foreign firms came to depend upon a state of war against the RUF. What Reno dubbed the ‘threat of peace’ led one hardliner, Julius Maada Bio, to launch a successful coup in January 1996.[97] Bio quickly succumbed to external pressure to allow the elections that saw Ahmed Tejan Kabbah assume the presidency. However, in May 1997, Kabbah too was toppled by yet another coup, led by Major Johnny Paul Koroma.

As even this brief account makes clear, Sierra Leone had suffered from decades of neopatrimonial rule without an open rebellion. It was only during the economic and political crises of the late 1980s that the RUF emerged on the scene. Although there is not a complete consensus on the reasons behind the RUF's rise, analysts generally agree that an important part of its membership came from the country's lumpen youth, who were mobilized by a small group of people angry at their exclusion from an opaque and corrupt patrimonial system that did not provide for their

needs.[98] They were supported economically, politically and militarily by external parties, including the authorities in Libya and Burkina Faso and, perhaps most importantly, Taylor's rebel group in Liberia, the NPFL.

Even with the dire state of the country, the RUF leaders were not particularly successful in attracting large numbers of voluntary recruits; this was because of their confused political message (which had not been helped by Sankoh organizing the murder of the movement's best intellectuals)[99] and the terrible atrocities they perpetrated against civilians. In order to grow its numbers the RUF thus quickly resorted to coercive methods. It was able to continue this process for a considerable period in large part because of the terrible state of Sierra Leone's armed forces. Yet, even as it grew more coercive, the RUF still attempted to rationalize to its new ‘abductees’ why they had been ‘recruited’. As one RUF lecture put it,

> There was no fairness and transparency in the system in Sierra Leone. Despite mineral riches, there was no development of roads, schools and health centres in rural areas. No one in government was listening. Thus the time for talking had passed. Violence was now the only option. Young people had been abducted for guerrilla training to regain their birthright.[100]

And sometimes it struck a chord. As one young abducted rebel fighter put it, ‘I'm revolutionary to the bone. I came to know how things were transpiring in this country. It's only a game of dirty politics!’[101] While the RUF's demands for a slice of the national cake were understandable, the methods it employed in pursuit of these demands were unjustifiable.[102] It thus quickly alienated the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans through its attacks on civilians and its failure to promote a genuine programme of societal transformation.[103] The RUF's moral bankruptcy was reflected in its repeated use of conspicuous atrocity. While all sides in the conflict were guilty of abuses, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Sierra Leone concluded that the RUF committed by far the highest proportion of atrocities.[104] Specifically, these rebels were thought to have been responsible for nearly 60 per cent of all violations recorded by the TRC during the war (see figure 3.1).[105]

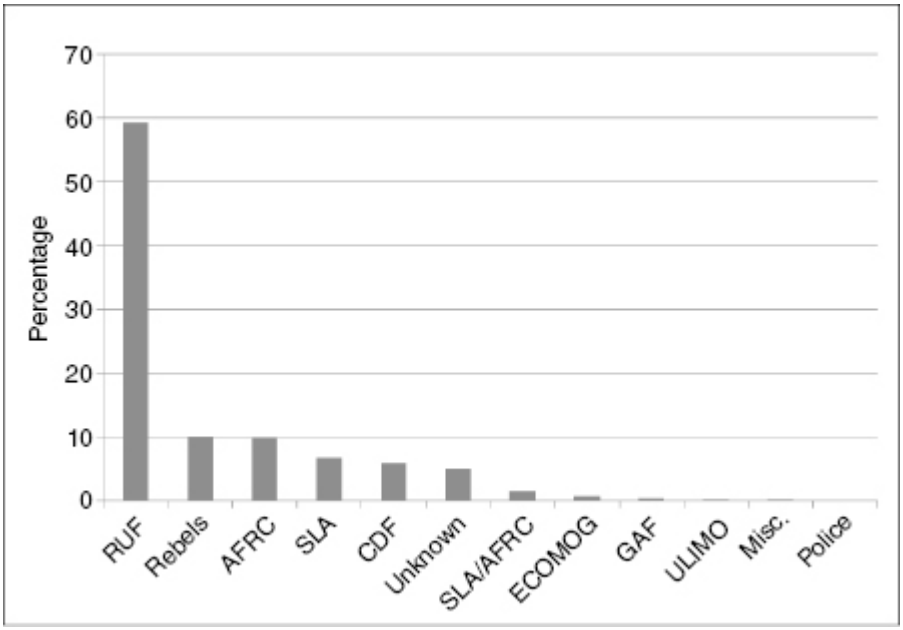

Figure 3.1 *Sierra Leone: proportion of violations by perpetrator group*
Source: Conibere et al., Appendix 1, p. 23.

Nevertheless, as President Kabbah correctly noted, 'while we [may] unreservedly condemn the junta and its RUF allies, we must not forget to ask ourselves why it happened.'[106] Part of the answer was that, since Siaka Stevens's rule, successive leaders of Sierra Leone had not only given people reason to sympathize with an insurgency but, in order to preserve their patrimonial networks, had dismantled the primary means to combat the one that emerged: an effective and accountable army.[107]

Conclusion

In a piece reflecting on the controversial elections in Ethiopia in 2005, Christopher Clapham argued that 'The place to start trying to understand any political crisis is always with the government in power.'[108] The evidence provided in this chapter suggests he is correct, especially when the government in power ran a neopatrimonial system. Although neopatrimonial rulers who possessed astute leadership skills and a surfeit of resources could avoid large-scale armed conflict for long periods of time, the inherent factionalism and the subsequent tendency to rely on coercion produced fundamentally unstable political orders. In this sense, neopatrimonial governance was an important ingredient in many of Africa's

armed conflicts. The usual trigger factors which caused the system to break down were an economic or political crisis or the ‘threat’ of genuine democratization. With the West's triumph in the Cold War, the threat of democratization appeared more regularly across the continent. In addition, it was ironic that the strategies deliberately pursued by neopatrimonial regimes often increased the risks of generating economic or political crises and made it harder to deal with insurgencies when they formed.

Sierra Leone was just one tragic example of these dynamics at work. In arguably the most careful study of the conflict, David Keen concluded that, by the end of the Cold War, the country's ‘long history of underdevelopment culminating in some two decades of single-party APC rule and endemic corruption had generated considerable support for some kind of radical “shake up”’.[109] When a small group of the marginalized had finally had enough, external support for their rebellion, combined with widespread disenchantment among the populace and the security services, ignited and sustained what one analyst dubbed ‘a dirty war in West Africa’.[110] Unfortunately, it was far from being the only one.

Notes

1 See, for example, Le Vine, ‘African patrimonial regimes’; Bratton and van de Walle, ‘Neopatrimonial regimes’; Bratton and van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments*; Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*; van de Walle, *African Economies*; Hyden, *African Politics*, chap. 5. Most analyses employing this concept have built on the work of the German sociologist Max Weber and his distinctions between systems of authority based on legal, traditional and charismatic sources. See Weber, *Economy and Society*.

2 See, for example, Erdmann and Engel, ‘Neopatrimonialism reconsidered’; Pitcher, Moran and Johnston, ‘Rethinking patrimonialism’.

3 Some analysts have suggested that it can also help us understand the dynamics of how these wars unfold, but this is not the focus of this chapter. Reno, ‘Patronage politics’; Murphy, ‘Military patrimonialism’.

4 Reno, ‘Patronage politics’, pp. 328–9.

5 Clientalism is the exchange or brokerage of specific services and resources between individuals for political support, often in the form of votes. Patronage ‘is the politically motivated distribution of “favours” not to individuals (as in clientalism) but essentially to groups, which in the African context will be mainly ethnic or sub-ethnic groups’. It is usually considered a tool of high-level politics used to create or maintain political order. Erdmann and Engel, ‘Neopatrimonialism reconsidered’, pp. 106–7.

6 This formulation draws on Kenneth Boulding's distinction between stable and unstable peace. See his *Stable Peace*.

7 Kaarsholm, ‘States of failure’, p. 4.

8 Ibid., p. 4; Bratton and van de Walle, ‘Neopatrimonial regimes’, p. 459.

9 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, p. xix.

10 For a discussion, see Le Vine, ‘African patrimonial regimes’. For a contrasting view which defines Botswana's polity in neopatrimonial terms, see Pitcher et al., ‘Rethinking patrimonialism’.

11 Clapham, *Third World Politics*, p. 48.

12 van de Walle, *African Economies*, p. 16. Chabal and Daloz made a similar point when they declared that in most African countries the state is ‘a pseudo-Western façade masking the realities of deeply personalized political relations’. *Africa Works*, p. 16.

13 Subsequent quotations are from Erdmann and Engel, ‘Neopatrimonialism reconsidered’, pp. 105–6 and 111.

14 Hyden, *African Politics*, p. 98.

15 Posner and Young, ‘The institutionalization’, p. 126.

16 Some African countries have a three-term limit (Cape Verde and Seychelles) whereas others have no official limit (Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Mauritius, South Sudan and Swaziland). See ACSS, *Africa and the Arab Spring* and Siegle, ‘Why term limits’.

17 The nine presidents that left office were Kérékou of Benin, Monteiro of Cape Verde, Rawlings of Ghana, Moi of Kenya, Konaré of Mali, Chissano of Mozambique, Trovoada of São Tomé and Principe, René of Seychelles and Mkapa of Tanzania. The three that tried to stay but failed were Muluzi of Malawi, Obasanjo of Nigeria and Chiluba of Zambia. The six that succeeded in staying were Déby of Chad, Bongo of Gabon, Conté of Guinea, Nujoma of Namibia, Eyadéma of Togo and Museveni of Uganda.

18 Posner and Young, ‘The institutionalization’, p. 134.

19 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, pp. xviii, xix.

20 Erdmann and Engel, ‘Neopatrimonialism reconsidered’, p. 114.

21 Toft, ‘Ending civil wars’, pp. 22–3. Toft's conclusion is based on using Polity IV project data to examine the level of authoritarianism five years before the outbreak of armed conflict in all civil wars worldwide during the period 1940–2002.

22 Pitcher et al., ‘Rethinking patrimonialism’, pp. 148–9.

23 Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, p. 162.

24 Cited in Dowden, *Africa*, p. 69.

25 Ibid., p. 69.

26 Reno, *Warlord Politics*, p. 2.

27 Omeje, ‘Understanding conflict resolution’, p. 78.

28 Dowden, *Africa*, p. 72.

29 Ibid.

30 Bates, *When Things Fell Apart*, p. 38.

31 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, p. 42.

32 Bates, *When Things Fell Apart*, pp. 38–9.

33 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, p. 39.

34 Reno, ‘The changing nature’, p. 323.

35 Hyden, *African Politics*, pp. 114–15.

36 Posner and Young, ‘The institutionalization’, p. 130.

37 Straus and Taylor, ‘Democratization and electoral violence’, p. 23.

38 van de Walle, *African Economies*, p. 115. For a more sympathetic view of the economic abilities of some neopatrimonial regimes, see Pitcher et al., ‘Rethinking patrimonialism’, pp. 133–5.

39 Bates, *When Things Fell Apart*.

40 See Reno, *Warlord Politics*, pp. 87–92; Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence*, chap. 3.

41 Bratton and van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments*, p. 83.

42 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, p. 37.

43 Ibid., p. 37.

44 On the idea of relative deprivation, see the discussion in chapter 4.

45 Commission for Africa, *Our Common Interest*.

46 Smith, *Political Violence*, p. 8.

47 Clapham, ‘Comments’.

48 Tronvoll, ‘Briefing’.

49 Lyons, ‘As Ethiopia Votes’.

50 Clapham, ‘Introduction’, p. 5. See also Reno, ‘The changing nature’, p. 332.

51 Bøås and Dunn, ‘African guerrilla politics’, p. 10.

52 Ibid., pp. 14–15.

53 Bøås, ‘Marginalized youth’, p. 46.

54 Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 3.

55 Reno, ‘Conflict and war in Africa’, pp. 21–2.

56 Chabal and Daloz, *Africa Works*, p. 15.

57 Herbst, ‘Economic incentives’, pp. 282–3.

58 Sasha Lezhnev, presentation at the Elliott School of International Affairs, Washington, DC, 16 April 2008.

59 Brabazon, *Liberia*, p. 6.

60 Collins, ‘Disaster in Darfur’, p. 9.

61 Ulph, ‘GSPC rival leader’.

62 Balint-Kurti, *Côte d'Ivoire's Forces Nouvelles*, pp. 18–19.

63 Hanson, *MEND*.

64 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab*, p. 29.

65 Walker, *What is Boko Haram?*, p. 3.

66 On the CNDP, see UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Group of Experts on the DRC*, para. 20. On the FDLR, see Romkema de Veenhoop, *Opportunities and Constraints*, p. 47.

67 Herbst, ‘Economic incentives’, p. 283.

68 Reno, ‘The changing nature’, p. 328.

69 Prunier, *Africa's World War*, p. 128.

70 In this context, marginalization was understood in a Coxian sense to refer to people who were not employed in the formal economy, had low or no education/skills, were engaged in base occupations and suffered from irregularity of, or no, cash income. See Cox, ‘Civil society’.

71 Leysens, ‘Social forces’, p. 52.

72 Goldstone et al., ‘A global forecasting model’ (2005). See also Goldstone et al., ‘A global forecasting model’ (2010).

73 Goldstone et al. (2005), p. 8.

74 Goldstone et al. (2010), p. 197.

75 Goldstone et al. (2005), p. 18. See also Goldstone et al. (2010), p. 197.

76 Marshall and Cole, ‘Global report’, p. 6.

77 Goldstone et al. (2005), p. 17. See also Goldstone et al. (2010), p. 197.

78 Goldstone et al. (2005), p. 28. Two other important factors were infant mortality levels and neighbourhood politics, especially where four or more neighbouring states are experiencing armed conflict.

79 Ibid., pp. 24–5.

80 Ibid., p. 25.

81 In this sense, Africa caught the tail end of the so-called third wave of democratization which began in the mid-1970s. See Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

82 *Human Security Brief 2007*, p. 26.

83 Goldstone et al. (2005), pp. 28–9.

84 Kandeh, ‘Ransoming the state’, pp. 351–8.

85 Reno, *Corruption*.

86 Abdullah, ‘Bush path’, p. 206.

87 See Reno, *Corruption*, pp. 72–5, 89–90, 109–12, 143, 149–52; Kandeh, ‘Ransoming the state’, pp. 351–2.

88 My account draws upon Reno, *Corruption*; Reno, *Warlord Politics*; and Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*.

89 Reno, *Warlord Politics*, p. 116.

90 Reno, ‘Economic reform’, p. 27.

91 Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, pp. 70–3.

92 The Sierra Leonean military grew from about 4,000 in 1990 to 12,000 by 1993. Cited in Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, p. 57.

93 World Bank, *Sierra Leone*, para. 5.1.

94 Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, pp. 36, 56.

95 The best overall account of this process is in ibid.

96 For details, see Musah, ‘A country under siege’.

97 Reno, ‘Ironies’, p. 15.

98 See Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*; Abdullah, ‘Bush path’; Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*; Humphreys and Weinstein, ‘Who fights?’.

99 Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, p. 47.

100 Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, p. 177.

101 Cited in Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, p. 45.

102 See Gberie, *A Dirty War*.

103 Adebajo and Keen, ‘Banquet for warlords’, p. 8; Abdullah, ‘Bush path’, pp. 222–7.

104 Conibere et al., ‘Appendix 1’.

105 The database for the TRC included 40,242 violations suffered by 14,995 victims. These were coded into the seventeen types of violation listed in chapter 2, p. 49.

106 Cited in Kandeh, ‘Ransoming the state’, p. 349.

107 See Reno, *Warlord Politics*, p. 8.

108 Clapham, ‘Comments’.

109 Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, p. 64.

110 Gberie, *A Dirty War*.

Chapter Four
Resources

Africa's wars are often referred to as resource wars, fought not over competing political ideologies but by greedy individuals in order to accumulate wealth by extracting the continent's ‘natural’ resources such as oil, gems, minerals and timber. This is not unique to Africa. Over the last sixty years, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) estimated that at least 40 per cent of all intra-state conflicts worldwide have been linked to natural resources. Worryingly, UNEP concluded that these conflicts were twice as likely to relapse into violence in the first five years after a settlement.[1] More recently, in 2014, ACLED analysts concluded that the onset of conflicts ‘with direct links’ to ‘natural resources’ ‘is now over 5 times the level it was about 10 years ago’.[2] Some analysts suggested the drying up of superpower patronage after the Cold War exacerbated this trend by encouraging Africa's belligerents to become self-financing.[3] Others argued that the end of the Cold War changed little: Africa's rebellions were always best explained ‘by the atypical circumstances that generate profitable opportunities’.[4] This ‘greed thesis’ argued that rebels were motivated principally by the prospects for looting and exploiting resources rather than by rectifying injustice.

From this perspective, rebellion was essentially a form of criminal activity, only it was less common because of the greater risks and start-up costs involved.[5] Lots of African rebels seemed to fit the bill. Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), for example, was comprised of lumpen youth, mostly ‘unemployed and unemployable’ males ‘prone to criminal behaviour, petty theft, drugs, drunkenness and gross indiscipline’.[6] Rwanda's genocidal militias were said to consist of many ‘small-time criminals’ and ‘young thugs who worked for the highest bidder’.[7] Similarly, the *janjawiid* in Darfur were characterized as ‘outlaw-type bands’ and ‘bandit militia’ comprised mainly of unemployed youths whose main motivation was a desire to acquire resources.[8] More recently, in the DRC, the government and MONUSCO peacekeepers were said to be ‘no longer dealing with a political insurgency’ but ‘facing criminal groups with links to

transnational organized criminal networks involved in large scale smuggling and laundering'.[9]

In post-Cold War Africa's political landscape the greed thesis seemed simple, intuitively appealing, and seductive to policymakers. It was simple because war was defined as having a clear economic rationale – or, as David Keen put it, 'the continuation of economics by other means'.[10] The thesis was appealing because resources did seem to play a crucial role in many African wars. Indeed, some analyses concluded that there was 'an economic core … common to all of them'.[11] The greed thesis was also appealing to policymakers not least because it held out the promise that conflicts might be managed from the outside by imposing sanctions regimes which could cut off rebel resources and hence their ability to wage war. And, despite all their known problems, imposing sanctions was much easier than getting bogged down in the messy business of finding political solutions and perhaps even having to engage militarily.

While this perspective contains an important grain of truth it is also misleading, particularly in the popular caricature of these arguments that suggests there is something about 'resources' which explains warfare. Among its most important limitations are its preoccupation with the rebel side of the civil war equation at a time when most violence has been initiated by state elites and when there is sometimes a porous state/rebel divide; its strange tendency to de-politicize conflicts, reflected in its complete silence on one of the most important resources in Africa – sovereignty (see chapter 5); its lack of discussion of the transnational corporations which facilitate the buying and selling of the commodities in question; its simplistic, static and deeply cynical understanding of the motives behind why people join armed groups; its reliance on inappropriate proxies (especially in its quantitative form); and its confusing and misleading approach to thinking about resources.

The last point is particularly important for this chapter. Resources are not phenomena that exist apart from society which somehow exert a gravitational force over human behaviour. Rather, it is society that generates resources – i.e. those things which enable actors to achieve their objectives. Resources are thus intimately tied to both the fulfilment of material needs and the social construction of value. Put another way, resources enable but

they do not cause. When they are understood as enablers, it becomes clear that wars cannot be fought without resources. It therefore makes little analytical sense to talk of resource wars because it makes little sense to talk about non-resource wars. Resources such as people, money and weapons are necessary to sustain a regime and launch a rebellion, whatever their objectives and whatever motivates their participants.

It is therefore also unhelpful to distinguish ‘natural’ as opposed to some type of ‘unnatural’ resources, because phenomena only become resources when they are perceived as useful in pursuit of somebody's agenda. Consequently, the trap of ‘natural resource reductionism’ needs to be avoided because it ignores the inherent political and social dimensions of armed conflict.[12] The fact that many of Africa's belligerents were self-financing does not mean the conflicts were about resources *per se*. When some resources generated profits beyond what was necessary to sustain an actor's military campaign, it provided armed groups with an incentive to continue fighting and avoid peace. But this is not the same as saying resources cause wars. At most, economic motivations were present along with several other factors, but pure ‘looting rebellions’ did not exist. If they did, more of Africa's military leaders would surely ‘cash out after they have made millions, invest those monies in a hedge fund and retire to more pleasant surroundings’. Instead, Jonas Savimbi, Charles Taylor and other war leaders continued ‘to engage in the extraordinarily dangerous and perhaps unprofitable strategy of trying to capture the capital’.[13] Contrary to the greed perspective, case study evidence provides overwhelming support for the argument that it is political systems, not resources *per se*, that are the crucial factor in elevating the risk of armed conflict. As discussed below, greater emphasis should thus be given to examining the apparatuses of resource governance.

This chapter addresses these issues in three sections. It starts by analysing the most popular general hypotheses about the relationship between resources and armed conflict. The basic argument is that, because resources are socially constructed, more attention should focus on the political economy of the particular contexts which increase the likelihood of warfare. The chapter then discusses the most widely debated factors that link resources and warfare. First, it analyses two types of commodities that were at the forefront of debates about Africa's wars (oil and diamonds), in large

part because of their importance to the global economy beyond Africa. Then it examines the recent resurgence of interest in demographic issues and environmental change, particularly changes linked with climate, water and land. The final section examines Africa's increasingly intense pastoral conflicts as illustrations of struggles that arguably exemplify the closest connections between the human search to fulfil material needs, Africa's changing ecology, and the politics of governance structures in some of the peripheries of the continent's state system.

Resources in Armed Conflict

Natural resources are often said to lie at the root of many African conflicts. One example is the NGO Global Witness and its focus on ‘conflict resources’, defined as ‘natural resources whose systematic exploitation and trade in a context of conflict contribute to, benefit from, or result in the commission of serious violations of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law or violations amounting to crimes under international law’.[14]

This type of thinking has generated numerous attempts to classify the relationship between natural resources and armed conflict. The UNEP, for example, identified a trilogy of links.[15] First, struggles to control resources contributed to the outbreak of conflict when the wealth derived from them was not apportioned fairly; when there was competition for scarce resources including land, forests and water; and when states were dependent on the export of a narrow set of primary commodities. Second, natural resources contributed to financing and sustaining conflicts, usually by making insurgencies economically feasible and by encouraging parties to secure the assets that enabled them to continue their struggle. Third, continued access to profitable resources undermined the prospects for peacemaking. A similar but more nuanced list was generated by Macartan Humphreys, who identified five links between natural resources and warfare:

- *rent seeking*: the political impact of the availability of large natural resource rents to ruling elites (popularly known as the resource curse);
- *grievances*: primarily associated with the illegitimate distribution of natural resource wealth and socioeconomic impacts of extractive

operations;

- *economic instability*: generated by the distortions associated with high dependence on natural resources;
- *conflict financing*: how natural resource wealth affects the means for belligerents to continue fighting;
- *peace spoiling*: when natural resource wealth provides disincentives for peace.[16]

Whereas the first three were associated with the outbreak of armed conflict, the final two focused on the role of resources in fuelling war.

As these examples suggest, contemporary thinking about the causes or outbreak of armed conflicts has been dominated by two broad and seemingly contradictory hypotheses: (1) a scarcity of important resources increases the risk of war; and (2) an abundance of valuable resources increases the risk of war.

The *resource scarcity* perspective has a long pedigree and global reach. Indeed, the dominant interpretation of the long sweep of human civilization offered across the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences suggests that competition for scarce resources – particularly somatic and reproductive resources – is the ultimate cause of fighting between groups of humans.[17] The contemporary variant is that groups will fight to secure access to the natural resources necessary for their survival: the more scarce the resource, the more bitter the fight. Among examples in Africa are shrinking range/grazing pasture, desertification of productive agricultural land, or declining water resources. Cases which would appear to confirm this thesis can certainly be found in Africa, particularly when focusing on relatively localized episodes of violence (discussed below). Cattle-herding communities which straddle the Kenya–Uganda border, for example, have often engaged in organized violence when there have been dramatic changes in available resources. When mixed with modern firearms, their traditional forms of raiding have often left scores of people dead – certainly enough to warrant inclusion as a ‘minor armed conflict’ in Uppsala terminology.[18] Another example hit the headlines in late 2009 when a so-called fish war broke out around the village of Dongo in the DRC's Equateur province.[19] Fighting began when a militia from the Enyele

community attacked members of the Monzaya, apparently over access to fishing ponds and nearby farm land. The violence left nearly fifty people dead and caused more than 20,000 to flee their homes. Even with the subsequent arrival of government troops and UN peacekeepers the situation escalated, causing the displacement of an estimated 145,000 people. On closer inspection, however, this episode had as much to do with political intrigues within and between the communities as with access to fish.[20]

In certain contexts an *abundance of resources*, particularly 'lootable' resources, is said to be a curse rather than an opportunity for development. Specifically, revenues generated from these resources influence the likelihood of armed conflict breaking out, the character and dynamics of conflicts, and conflict duration. Resources are commonly thought to extend conflicts because profit provides a powerful disincentive for peace. In relation to conflict dynamics, an abundance of resources is said to turn political rebellions into criminal rackets, to intensify fighting around resource-rich areas and, particularly if mass atrocities are committed, possibly to generate sanctions regimes in the buyers' markets.

In relation to the outbreak of violence, several mechanisms are commonly identified. Extreme versions of abundance arguments verge on the deterministic by suggesting there is something inherent in certain types of resources that produces conflict. For example, the editor of *Foreign Policy* magazine, one of the best-selling publications on international affairs worldwide, recently declared that 'poor but resource-rich countries tend to be underdeveloped not despite their hydrocarbon and mineral riches but *because of their resource wealth*.'[21] A more nuanced position argues that 'lucrative natural resources *can have* detrimental effects on the socioeconomic and political stability of a country, creating permissive causes of violence and armed conflict.'[22] Another variant suggests that certain types of resources are likely to stimulate particular types of conflict dynamics.[23] Separatist conflicts, for instance, are said to be more likely in resource-rich regions.[24]

Apart from these common variants, Michael Ross has identified two additional ways in which resource abundance relates to the onset of wars. In the first scenario, resource wealth helped trigger conflicts by encouraging interventions from neighbouring powers, thus placing the emphasis firmly

back on political decisions. In Africa, Ross discussed two cases where external powers supported nascent rebel groups against incumbent governments, in part to gain access to natural resource wealth: Charles Taylor's support for the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone and the support provided by Ugandan and Rwandan forces to rebel movements in the DRC.[25]

The second mechanism was when rebel groups and/or governments sold what Ross called ‘booty futures’ – the right to exploit mineral resources that the prospective seller has not yet captured. Once again, this emphasizes the crucial importance of relationships between actors rather than the existence of resources *per se*. Ross observed that booty futures were significant ingredients in the conflicts in the Republic of Congo, the DRC, Angola, Sierra Leone and possibly Liberia. Although rebels in these conflicts initially possessed few lucrative resources, they had a chance of securing them in combat. Insurgents traded the prospect of access to these future mineral rights to foreign firms and neighbouring governments and used the proceeds to pay soldiers and buy arms, and thus gain the capacity to capture the promised resource. In April 1997, for example, Laurent Kabila was able to sign a deal worth $885 million with American Mining Fields when it became clear that his AFDL forces were going to topple Mobutu's regime. Similarly, in the Republic of Congo, Ross recounts how

> a former president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, received $150 million from the French oil company, Elf-Aquitaine, to help him defeat the incumbent president, Pascal Lissouba, either by force or through a national election; the payment was clearly meant to ensure Elf's access to Congolese oil in a future Sassou government. The election never took place. Instead, Sassou and Lissouba fought a four-month war [during 1997] that destroyed much of Brazzaville and cost 10,000 lives, eventually leaving Sassou in charge.[26]

Although out of power at the time, Sassou was no ordinary rebel since, despite being voted out of office in 1992, he maintained good relations with several neighbouring regimes and international institutions, and senior figures within Congo's armed forces remained loyal to him rather than Lissouba. Indeed, the residue of his sovereign connections reflects the fact that it is usually much easier for governments than for rebels to sell booty

futures. During Sierra Leone's war, the government saved itself from defeat twice by selling off the right to exploit diamond fields that it did not yet control. Similarly, in the early 1990s the Angolan government sold off future exploitation rights to two oil fields under its control but also diamond areas, some of which were controlled at the time by UNITA rebels.[27]

While the scarcity/abundance approaches have generated some interesting insights, particularly Ross's work on external intervention and booty futures, the general hypotheses are unhelpful for several reasons. First, it is too deterministic to posit an automatic link between scarce/abundant resources and the likelihood of armed conflict. This underplays the more important effects of governance structures and the social relations of particular actors. It also means these perspectives have difficulty accounting for changes in the effects of ‘dangerous’ resources over time. For instance, it is widely acknowledged that the likelihood of civil wars in countries that produce oil, gas and diamonds increased significantly from the early 1970s to the late 1990s.[28] Yet nothing inherent in those commodities changed during this period. Rather, changing political conditions altered their social value and effects.

The conflicts in Zaire/DRC provide an excellent example of these political dynamics at work. Although eastern DRC has always possessed huge amounts of minerals and gems, the presence of these items did not cause the recent conflicts there. Rather, what eventually became known as Africa's world war started because of a mix of cross-border security issues in the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and governance issues in Zaire, where anti-Mobutu groups saw an opportunity finally to topple the wily old dictator with the help of the regimes in Rwanda and Uganda. Of course, the political economy of the country's resources soon became a crucial factor in shaping the dynamics of the conflict, but resources do not explain its beginning or the underlying motives of its participants.[29] However, as the war and state of insecurity persisted and as other sectors of the economy collapsed, gold, 3T minerals (tin, tungsten, tantalum), charcoal, timber, wildlife, and other valuable commodities came to occupy a more prominent place in the local political economy, and hence became more important for armed groups to acquire in order to pursue their agendas.

The second key point to recall about the Congo wars is that these resources did not extract and sell themselves – this was done by particular actors. Analysts therefore need to understand the identities of those actors, how they operated and, crucially, what political relationships and agendas influenced them. The most detailed early answers to these questions were set out in two reports to the UN Security Council by panels of experts, which concluded that the central mechanism in the 'illegal exploitation' of DRC's resources was the 'elite network'. These networks operated in three areas of the DRC: government-controlled, Rwanda-controlled and Uganda-controlled.[30] They consisted of a small core of political and military elites and business persons who cooperated to generate revenue. Such enterprises were made possible by their control over the military and other security forces in their area which they used to threaten and intimidate and to monopolize production, commerce and fiscal functions. In the Ugandan and Rwandan areas they also maintained the façade of rebel administrations. The financial benefits were derived through a variety of criminal activities conducted by business companies or joint ventures formed explicitly for this purpose. The UN panels concluded that the networks required the participation of eleven African transit states and seventeen end-user countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America. In addition, the networks sought out the support of organized or transnational criminal groups. In the government-controlled area, Congolese and Zimbabwean political, military and business elites generated at least $5 billion of assets, mainly revenues from minerals. In the Rwanda-controlled area the elite network was managed centrally from the army's Congo Desk. This explicitly tied the revenues from diamonds and coltan into a state security project which generated well over $300 million for the Rwandan military. Unlike the centrally managed Rwandan operation, the Ugandan network was decentralized, less hierarchical and run largely for the personal benefit of high-ranking UPDF officers, private businessmen and selected rebel leaders/administrators. It too generated most of its revenues from coltan and diamonds. The concept of elite networks reminds us that resources are always part of a political project. It is these political agendas, not the resources themselves, which generate conflict.

A second problem with the scarcity/abundance approaches is their tendency to focus on a narrow subset of countries. A more comprehensive look at resource endowments which includes rich, stable states as well as poor,

unstable countries suggests that the effect of resources is non-monotonic – that is, it initially increases risk, but at a high level natural resources start to reduce the risk of war.[31] Again, this suggests resources themselves do not generate uniform effects but depend on the political circumstances.

A third limitation is that mineral wealth can explain only a small percentage of contemporary armed conflicts. For example, as Christopher Cramer observed, of the twenty-two states worldwide that experienced ‘complex humanitarian emergencies’ between 1992 and 1994, only seven could be called mineral-dominant economies.[32] Only three out of the nine African emergencies during this period occurred in mineral-dominant economies (Angola, Algeria and Liberia – the last being a borderline mineral-dominant economy, with only 45 per cent of its total exports being mineral/fuel exports in 1980).[33]

A fourth problem stems from the fact that scarcity and abundance are both relative terms. Consequently, this approach suffers from a levels-of-analysis problem – that is, what might be scarce at a global level may be abundant at the local level and vice versa. For example, while ‘coltan’ (columbite-tantalite) production is relatively rare globally, approximately 10 per cent of the world's reserves are in central Africa and the DRC was probably the world's second largest source of tantalum in the 2000s. As a consequence it is not always very clear whether it is local abundance or global scarcity doing the explanatory work.

A fifth problem, associated particularly with the scarcity thesis, is that scarcity itself is often a product of armed conflict rather than its cause. For example, most famines in Africa were the direct or indirect product of war. In addition, the scarcity thesis ignores numerous general counter-arguments, including that resource scarcity can result in socio-economic innovation to diversify an economy; that international trade and market mechanisms can to some extent counterbalance localized scarcities or motivate innovations and shift resources; that states in resource-poor areas are more dependent than resource rich-countries on diversified financial inputs, so the government is more likely to be accountable and representative towards society; and that it is in the interest of the elite in resource-poor states to develop and harness human capital, rather than protect scarce or non-existent resource rents.[34]

A final problem with this mode of thinking, and in many ways the most fundamental, is that resources are, by definition, not natural; they are socially constructed. As Philippe Le Billon neatly put it, resources are not, they become: ‘Whether or not *nature* is transformed into a resource is related to human desires, needs, and practices.’ Specifically, nature's transformation ‘into tradable commodities is a deeply political process; involving the definition of property rights, the organisation of labour, and the allocation of profits’. In other words, it requires not just nature's ‘gift’ but the construction of a ‘political economy of resources’ – that is, ‘the creation of markets and associated commodity chains, predicated upon the social construction of desirable resources’.[35] Take the case of diamonds, Africa's archetypal conflict resource. They have no industrial use except for cutting and their abrasive properties: their high value stems from their symbolic importance in societal rituals concerning engagement, marriage, beauty and fashion and the international markets which have developed around them. Moreover, shifts in world production processes regularly change the natural elements which humans consider most valuable. With the increasing importance of micro-processors used in mobile phone and computer technologies, previously abandoned tin mines become valuable once again as routes to extract coltan – a crucial component of such goods. Similarly, as prices of cassiterite started rising on the world markets, especially in 2007–9, miners in the North Kivu region of the DRC focused their attention on extracting it rather than coltan.[36]

These points suggest that analysts need to think both about the political contexts in which particular resources are created and which ones might increase the likelihood of armed conflict. The two principal contenders in this approach are contexts of relative deprivation and conditions of ‘bad’ governance and political instability.

Gudrun Østby and her colleagues have made a strong case for focusing on resources in contexts of relative deprivation, arguing that even comparatively weak relative deprivation figures (e.g. two-thirds the national average) mixed with extractable commodities make a region significantly more susceptible to armed conflict.[37] They build upon Ted Gurr's classic argument that deprived individuals are more likely to take up arms against their governments. Gurr defined relative deprivation as the discrepancy between what people think they deserve (value expectations) and what they

actually think they can get (value capabilities). From this perspective, people become frustrated if they do not enjoy what they think they are rightfully entitled to. If such frustration is felt for prolonged periods or intensely enough it generates anger which may be expressed violently. In Gurr's words, ‘The potential for collective violence varies strongly with the intensity and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collectivity.’[38] Among their examples, Østby et al. discuss the case of Chad, where the relatively resource-rich southern regions wanted greater autonomy in order to secure a greater share of revenues from oil discoveries in their regions. As figure 4.1 illustrates, the civil war in Chad in 1997 broke out in several regions that had oil deposits and yet were socially worse off than the national mean.

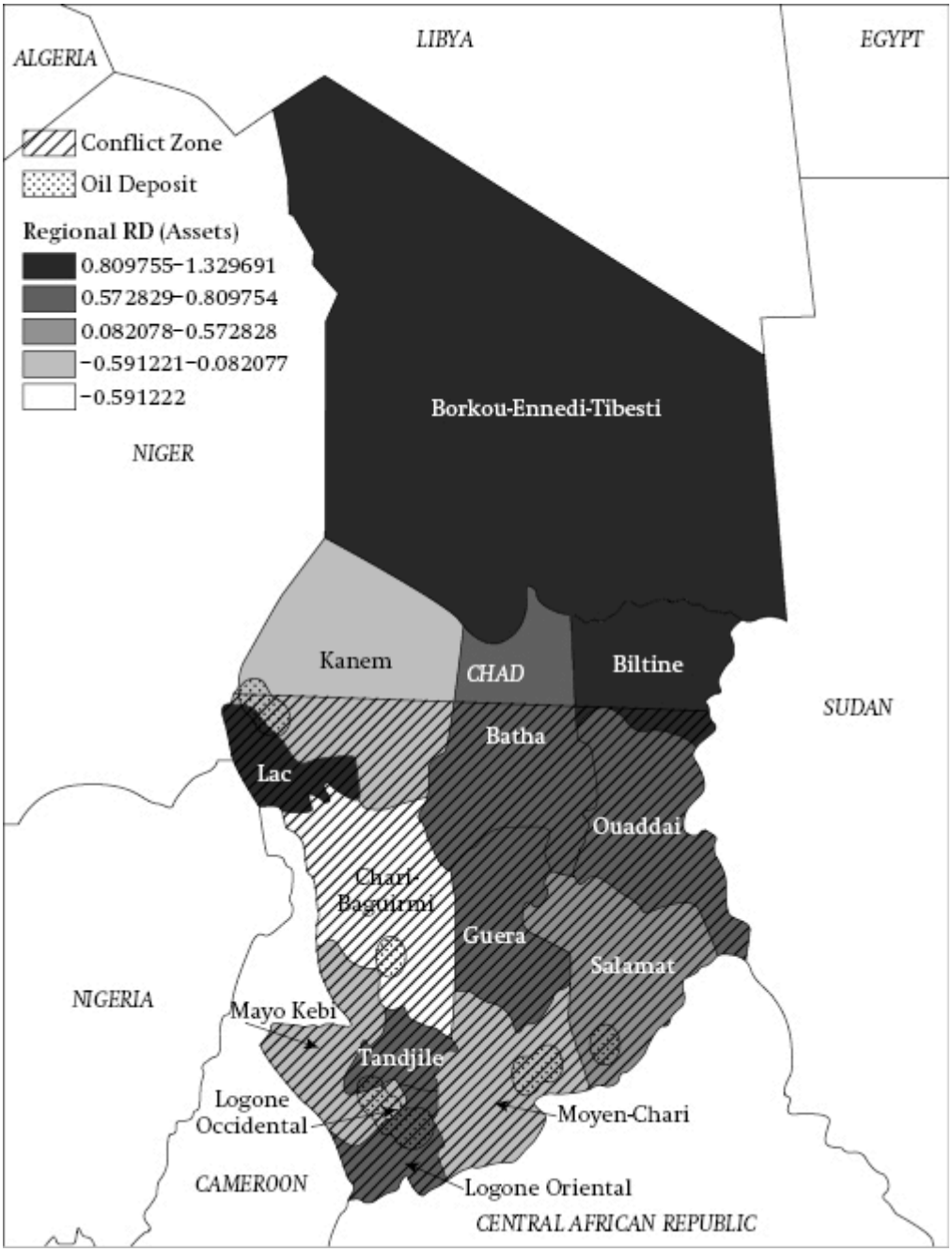

Figure 4.1 *Relative asset deprivation, natural resources and conflict onset in Chad, 1997*
The regional RD figures refer to the relative deprivation level of the region based on the model developed by Østby et al. to measure regional assets such as socio-economic indicators, levels of education, presence of natural resources, etc.

Source: Østby, Nordås and Rød, 'Regional inequalities', p. 319.

The other main approach suggests that the domestic political structures are crucial in determining how resources are put to use. Since the presence of natural resources rarely triggers war in stable political environments, it must be the combination of resources and unstable governance which represents the most explosive mix. This approach has stimulated at least two variants, which might be categorized as focusing on *exploitative* governance structures and *unstable* governance structures, respectively.

A prominent example of the first variant is Colin Kahl's state exploitation thesis. Based on his analysis of the relationship between demographic and environmental issues and armed conflict in Kenya during the early 1990s, Kahl argued that state elites and their supporters exploit rising resource scarcities and channel societal grievances to advance their own political agendas.[39] He concluded that there were two key intervening variables in this process. The first was the inclusivity of political institutions – i.e. whether key social groups were empowered to participate in and influence the decision-making by state elites. Kahl concluded that more inclusive institutions reduce the likelihood that state elites will exploit demographic and environmental stress. The second key factor was what he called ‘groupness’ – the extent to which individuals rely on distinct identity groups for their physical, economic and psychic security. A high degree of groupness was said to increase the likelihood of state exploitation by facilitating the formation of conflict groups.

A good example of the second variant is the critique of the resource curse thesis in Congo-Brazzaville conducted by Pierre Englebert and James Ron.[40] Like Kahl, they too highlight the crucial importance of the ‘interaction between primary commodities and domestic politics’ in understanding the likelihood and course of war. Unlike Kahl's stress on powerful exploitative elites, Englebert and Ron argue that it is political instability, not authoritarianism and elite manipulation, which when mixed with resource abundance creates the most combustible cocktail.[41] In their words,

> If a country has a stable political system, authoritarian or otherwise, it is unlikely to experience civil war, regardless of resource availability and distribution. … No matter how tempting natural resources might be and how they may exacerbate ongoing instability and armed conflict, they are unlikely to stimulate civil war on their own unless the political context is already unstable.[42]

Their analysis concluded that Congo-Brazzaville had been dependent on oil for decades but that Denis Sassou Ngeusso was able to avoid civil war between 1979 and 1992 by running a stable, single-party neopatrimonial regime (see chapter 3). The problem came in the early 1990s, when he came under international, primarily Western, pressure to democratize. Elections were held in 1992, but Sassou's subsequent defeat precipitated several rounds of ‘brutal militia fighting’ over the next seven years which displaced one-third of the country's population, left tens of thousands of people dead and injured, and saw thousands suffer sexual assaults. Sassou regained control of the capital city in 1997, and, ironically, the conflict was brought to at least a temporary end in 1999 when he was able to engineer what Englebert and Ron called a ‘patrimonial peace’, wherein he bought off most of his elite opponents by offering them jobs in the public sector. This left many Congolese poor, disenfranchised and with a corrupt set of rulers, but it did stop the civil war.

The Usual Suspects

The following section refines my analysis by disaggregating the broad category of ‘resources’ into particular types of commodities and their relationship to armed conflict. At the forefront of debates about warfare in Africa have been oil and diamonds, but there was also a recent resurgence of interest in demography and environmental change, especially issues related to water, climate and land.[43]

Diamonds

In recent decades, Africa's ‘blood diamonds’ were widely considered a powerful source of conflict. The UN Security Council, for example, established sanctions on the export of diamonds from rebel-held parts of Angola from 1998, as well as Sierra Leone from 2000. There were also

significant efforts to reform the international diamond industry by developing various forms of certification to prove the origins of particular stones.[44]

In reality, the relationship between warfare and diamonds is complicated. First, there is important quantitative evidence from large-N studies which concludes that the presence of alluvial diamonds in particular can increase the risk of civil war, especially in political contexts characterized by tensions over governance structures.[45] Alluvial diamonds are riskier because they are open to artisanal mining, whereas primary or Kimberlite deposits require high levels of industrialization for extraction; particularly in weak states, governments struggle to control artisanal mining; and the stones are small and weigh very little and are thus easy to steal and transport.

On the other hand, more qualitative analysis suggests that, although there are an estimated twenty conflicts worldwide between 1946 and 2005 which could plausibly be related to diamonds, in the period after 1990 there are only two African cases where diamonds were ‘strongly related to conflict’: Sierra Leone (1991–2001) and Angola (1993–2002) (see table 4.1).[46] Even in these two cases, however, there is no persuasive evidence that diamonds caused the conflict. Where diamonds were relevant they seemed to play two roles: first, as a source of revenue for parties already in conflict; and, second, to the extent that revenues from their extraction were unfairly distributed, they generated grievances which fuelled justifications for rebellion.[47]

Table 4.1 Diamond-related armed conflicts in Africa, 1990–2005

Location	Government (Side A)	Rebel (Side B)	Duration	War-related deaths	Major rebel funding sources
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone, ECOWAS, UK	RUF, AFRC	1991–2001	75,000	Diamonds ($25–$75 million p.a.)
Angola	Angola	UNITA	1991–2002	700,000	Diamonds ($200–$600 million p.a.)
DRC	Zaire	AFDL, Rwanda	1996–7	230,000	Proxy
DRC	DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia	RCD, MLC, Rwanda, Uganda	1998–2003	2.5 million	Gold, coltan, coffee, diamonds
Liberia	Liberia	NPFL	1989–96	200,000	Iron, timber, rubber, diamonds
Liberia	Liberia	MODEL, LURD	2000–3	2,000	Proxy
CAR	CAR, Libya	Military faction	2001–2	500	Proxy
Côte d'Ivoire	Côte d'Ivoire	MPCI, MJP, MPIGO, FN	2002–5	850	Cocoa, timber, diamonds
Angola	Angola, Cuba	UNITA, South Africa	1975–91	500,000	Proxy
Guinea	Guinea	Military faction, RFDG	2000–1	1,100	N/A

Source: Adapted from Le Billon, 'Diamond wars?', p. 353.

In Sierra Leone diamond mining had gone on for decades in more or less the same fashion without generating a civil war. Nor is there any good evidence to claim that the RUF rebels emerged as a vehicle to accumulate diamonds.[48] It is also not true that once started the conflict was fought over diamonds. As the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) concluded, even this is 'only partly true', because the war 'would have taken place even without the existence of diamonds in the country'. At most, diamonds were one among many elements 'that fuelled the conflict'.[49] The TRC placed the ultimate responsibility for the conflict squarely on the shoulders of successive corrupt and anti-democratic regimes, an analysis which supports the emphasis placed on neopatrimonialism provided in chapter 3 of this book. As Christopher

Cramer observed, successive post-independence governments in Sierra Leone adopted policies which destroyed other non-mineral economic activities, ‘thereby increasing the relative value of natural resources and shunting these resources closer to the heart of Sierra Leone's politics’.[50]

Angola is another case where the presence of diamonds during wartime does not explain why there was conflict. At the most basic level, diamonds were first discovered in Angola in 1912, but the war did not start until the 1960s. Moreover, diamonds did not play any significant role until a new phase of the war erupted in October 1992 – after disputed elections and the battle of Luanda. By this stage the drying up of various external sources of Cold War finance had imposed new strategic imperatives on the conflict parties. The government's economic lifeline lay with oil (see below). On the other hand, the key to the continued war effort for the UNITA rebels was the diamond fields, the main deposits of which were in the central highlands populated by the Ovimbundu. It was therefore crucial that UNITA was able to utilize Ovimbundu support in order to protect and institutionalize a shadow economy built around the illicit export of diamonds.[51] Between 1992 and 1998 alone, UNITA is estimated to have acquired cumulative revenue of about $2–3.5 billion. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish means and ends. Although UNITA relied upon diamond revenues, its primary purpose was not to generate profit but to continue Savimbi's campaign for power. UNITA remained a political organization which attempted to distort the diamond trade to its benefit by (1) engaging in direct production and labour control; (2) selling licences to diamond buyers to operate in areas under its control; and (3) taxing independent mining operations that it tolerated in its territory.[52] In sum, it was Angola's war which encroached upon the existing diamond trade and made the lives of those who worked within it much more difficult and dangerous. It is also important to remember that the war ended swiftly in April 2002, less than two months after Savimbi was killed in an operation which took months of planning. Angola's diamond trade continues.

While diamonds are not the cause of warfare in Africa, once wars start, diamonds can become an important resource for the belligerents. Two of the most prominent contemporary examples are CAR and DRC. In CAR the illicit trade in diamonds fuelled the country's insecurity and violence by supporting the campaigns of both ex-Séléka as well as anti-Balaka militias

(see chapter 7). The trade is estimated to generate between $3.87 and $5.8 million annually (about 10–15 per cent of the average estimated official diamond production). Approximately one-quarter of the country's population is thought to be engaged in the trade, directly or indirectly. Most diamonds are smuggled out of CAR to neighbouring countries (Cameroon, DRC and Sudan) and then onto international markets.[53]

In DRC, the illicit diamond trade fuelled the protracted conflicts prevalent across the east of the country generating between $16 and $48 million per year.[54] Since most diamond mines are located in central DRC and usually without overt militia presence, most were under the control of government forces. When militias did gain control of mines, it was through raids and was temporary. UN experts estimated that by early 2015 militias controlled no more than one-tenth of the diamond trade, most of which involved organized criminal activity in collusion with government forces. DRC's diamonds are usually flown out of the country because ‘aircraft are fast and discreet’ and offer ‘a footprint free means of crossing borders’.[55]

Oil

In quantitative large-N studies analysing the causes of armed conflicts, nothing has generated a greater degree of consensus than the idea that oil is dangerous and that oil exporters are at an elevated risk of civil war.[56] This occurs through several mechanisms.[57] First, oil-rich regions are said to foster insurgencies either by enabling insurgents to raise money to buy weapons or by generating grievances about the way the oil is extracted and/or the profits allocated. Consider, for example, how most Nigerians must feel about the fact that, between 1970 and 1999, the country's oil industry generated $231 billion in rents, but during the same period its GDP per capita actually fell from $264 to $250.[58] Second, extractable oil makes control of the government more attractive because of the large revenues at stake. In the Gulf of Guinea oil-producing states, for example, one estimate suggested that on average the oil sector generated 68 per cent of government receipts.[59] Third, the fluctuating price of oil on the global markets means that it can render governments unstable through a process linked to trade shocks. The first two points are particularly salient in light of the argument that oil-rich regimes are also likely to become more

authoritarian, as they have ‘little need to take seriously the task of widening the tax base’.[60]

Once again, however, it is unhelpful to think of oil causing Africa's wars. Brief illustrations from two of Africa's biggest oil producers, Angola and Nigeria, should make the point. As noted above, Angola's war was regularly labelled one of Africa's key commodity conflicts. Historically, Angola has been what Christopher Cramer called ‘the ultimate primary commodity economy’ – based first on slaves, then on coffee, then on diamonds and, over the last few decades, on oil.[61] It is also clear that oil revenues shaped Angola's conflict in important ways. But they did not cause the war. Instead, war, profit and power existed in a complex and shifting relationship. Like diamonds, oil had little to do with the start of the conflict in the 1960s. And, even after the war began, people did not make rational cost–benefit calculations about whether to join a particular side – for most people their participation was down to coercion. Nor did oil revenues completely erase political agendas – even with oil monies the goal of the key leaders was military and political victory, as evidenced by the significant time and effort that went into the campaign to kill Savimbi.

After the Cold War ended, it was certainly fortunate for the MPLA that more and more off-shore oil was discovered, for it could not otherwise have afforded its army and armaments. Even so, as Ross observed, it was forced to sell off various booty futures and hire private firms to bolster its military campaign. The oil business was also quickly corrupted – an entirely unsurprising development given its integration into the MPLA's centralized, illiberal and anti-democratic structures. This, in turn, stunted the ability of Angolan firms to run the country's oil industry effectively. Instead, it was only multinational firms – especially Chevron, Petrofina, Texaco and Elf – that were competent enough to extract the oil. In sum, it seems reasonable to conclude that ‘high levels of commodity dependence did not initially cause civil war; instead, increasing reliance upon natural resources by both the state and UNITA has been a consequence of protracted conflict as other sectors of the economy were progressively destroyed.’[62] Or, as Cramer put it, ‘war and economic mismanagement … have created oil dependency rather than the other way around’.[63] It was political relationships that were the heart of Angola's war, and they remained its nervous system even when both sides turned to oil and diamonds to toughen their epidermis.

Politics was also the core ingredient in the Niger Delta conflict. Home to roughly 28 million people, the Delta covers 70,000 square kilometres, much of it a complex network of wetlands, rivers and mangrove swamps that houses a massive oil infrastructure consisting of 606 fields, 5,284 wells, 7,000 kilometres of pipelines, ten export terminals, 275 flow stations, ten gas plants, four refineries and a massive liquefied natural gas sector.[64] It is one of the richest oil grounds in the world, holding roughly 90 per cent of Nigeria's oil and gas reserves, yet its people live well below the country's mean level of development. This is partly because oil extraction has decimated the Delta's environment – the World Wildlife Fund estimated some 6,000 oil spills between 1970 and 2006.[65] The beneficiaries have been a tiny majority of political elites, with estimates suggesting that 85 per cent of oil revenues have gone to 1 per cent of the population, and some $50 billion of the total $270 billion accruing to the Nigerian central government between 1960 and the early 2000s has simply 'disappeared'.[66]

Decades of largely peaceful protest spearheaded in the early 1990s by Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) failed to change these underlying political dynamics. The central government's response was to deploy thousands of notoriously corrupt and ill-disciplined security forces and effectively to de-centralize its brand of corrupt governance by passing on a greater percentage of oil revenues to the regional governors in the Delta, making them 'political godfathers' in their own right.[67] In the 1990s the central government also turned 'community development' in the Delta over to the transnational oil companies, which continued to destroy local fishing and agriculture and provided few local jobs in return.[68] In November 1995, Saro-Wiwa and the 'Ogoni nine' were executed by the government, prompting more minority groups to take up the Ogoni's struggle, including the Adoni, the Itsekiri and the Ijaw. It also catalysed more violent forms of resistance. By 2007, for instance, over 36 per cent of Delta inhabitants revealed a 'willingness or propensity to take up arms against the state' – more than enough to produce the estimated 25,000 militants.[69]

The most coherent and well organized of the militant groups was the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), which emerged in late 2005 and began attacking pipelines and installations and kidnapping oil workers. Michael Watts described its appearance as 'the

almost inevitable end-point of a process of marginalisation, alienation and political mobilisation'.[70] As one local commentator put it, 'Behind the mask of MEND is a political subject forced to pick up an AK47 to restore his rights.'[71] The Movement's stated goals included reducing Nigeria's oil output by 30 per cent, which it accomplished within a year. By March 2009, national production had fallen to 1.6 million barrels of oil per day, down from 2.6 million in 2006.[72] MEND also called for the demilitarization of the Delta, for Shell to pay $1.5 billion in compensation for its destruction of the environment, and for negotiations mediated by a neutral third party over how to distribute the revenues from oil wealth. By late 2013, *The Economist* was estimating that oil theft cost Nigeria as much as $8 billion a year, equating to roughly 100,000 barrels a day.[73]

Oil is thus clearly an important ingredient in the conflict equation, but it is wrong to think of it as the principal cause of the war. The crucial underlying factor was the corrupt political relationships which made up what Watts called Nigeria's 'oil complex' – the murky alliances between local political, military and business elites, the transnational firms that represent the global oil industry, and a variety of foreign governments which turned a blind eye to the whole sordid process.[74] At the heart of the complex was the desire to maintain control of the institutions of state power and the vested interests that came with the control of (most of) Nigeria's oil. It was the impulse to change this terrible system that spawned the Delta's various resistance movements; it was the government's failure to listen which turned them into today's petro-insurgents.

Demography

Population change occupies a central place in Africa's history. It is, as John Iliffe put it, 'the thread that ties African history together at all its different periods and levels'.[75] During the second half of the twentieth century, he suggested that demography 'may have become … the chief historical motor of change in Africa'.[76] It is therefore plausible that demographic dynamics might be a key ingredient in Africa's war recipes. Unfortunately, 'until recently, no field of study existed that focused on the demographic aspects of war'.[77] As a result, the emerging conclusions about the relationship(s) between demography and warfare in Africa remain tentative.

Of course, this did not stop some writers making bold assertions. Harking back to much older Malthusian ideas, Robert Kaplan argued that West Africa's series of bloody civil wars during the 1990s resulted from a mix of overpopulation and environmental factors.[78] Africa's population was certainly growing – since 1900 the continent experienced a sustained and dramatic increase – although in recent decades the trend was slowed somewhat by the impact of HIV/AIDS.[79] But Kaplan offered a crude and misleading depiction of the relationship between population and war.

In the quantitative literature on the subject, demography does appear significant, although not in the way suggested by Kaplan. The three relevant but not particularly revealing conclusions are:[80] (1) states with more people are more likely to suffer civil wars;[81] (2) states with higher population density are more likely to experience civil war; and (3) there 'has been little support for the notion that excessive population growth is a risk factor for civil war'. On this last point there is a divide between large-N studies and more qualitative case studies, with the latter identifying high population growth as a significant ingredient in the outbreak of a variety of African conflicts, including those in Kenya,[82] Côte d'Ivoire,[83] Nigeria,[84] Senegal[85] and Uganda.[86] These types of studies also made the powerful point that the attempts to theorize 'a single demography of conflict' should probably be rejected in favour of an approach based on the recognition of different 'demographies of conflicts'.[87]

Two other issues have been identified as having significant bearing on the relationship between demography and war. The first is the combination of rising levels of urbanization and low levels of GDP per capita.[88] However, this finding has been strongly contested.[89] The second is a coincidence of 'youth bulges' – the number of young people in a population – and low economic growth (producing under- and unemployment).[90] This conclusion has generated particular cause for concern in Africa, given the very different demographic structure of the continent's weak states compared with the advanced industrial democracies within the European Union (see figure 4.2).

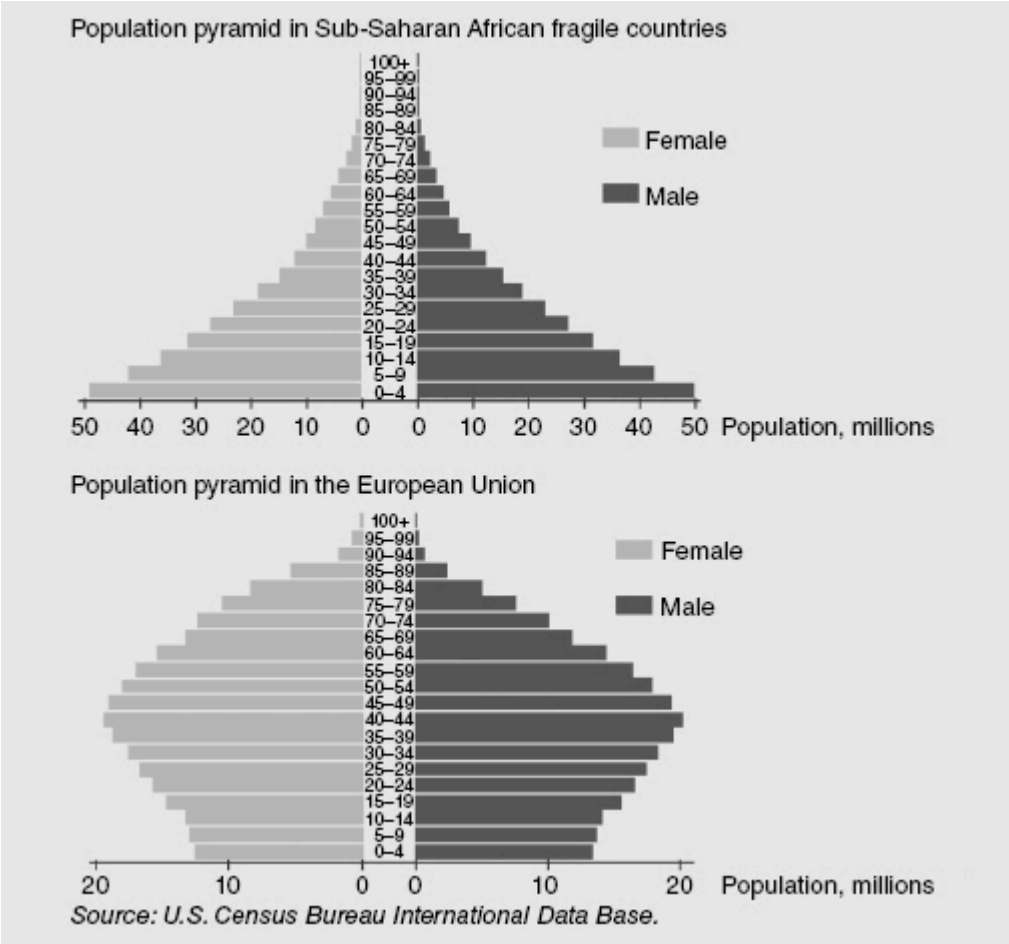

Figure 4.2 *Population structures in Africa's 'fragile' countries and the European Union*

Source: European Development Report, *Overcoming Fragility*, p. 3.

More recently still, Elliott Green has proposed a significant new theory of how demographic shifts in sub-Saharan Africa have combined with other factors to increase the risk of a particular type of armed conflict over land involving 'migrants and natives'.[91] Specifically, Green argues that Africa's traditionally low population density produced systems of governance which revolved around communal systems of land rights and large states, which are themselves widely considered more likely to experience civil wars.[92] However, he argues that the rapid population growth since the 1920s and low levels of urbanization encouraged 'internal rural–rural migration', which 'combined with these two variables to produce "sons of the soil" conflict over land'. The rise in such conflicts can therefore 'be traced to a large and very quick shift from low population densities to high population

growth over the past century and a half'. Green illustrates his arguments by claiming that the wars in Darfur, Sudan and the civil war in eastern DRC since 1996 should be understood as such 'sons of the soil' conflicts. In both cases, Green makes a persuasive case for considering these demographic trends to be part of the conflict recipe. But as with other attempts to apply general theories focused on long-term and incremental processes to explain the outbreak of specific wars, these factors alone do not sufficiently explain why the triggers of war erupted when they did.

In sum, while there are good reasons why conflict analysts should pay more attention to demographic ingredients in some of Africa's war recipes, there is no compelling evidence that demographic changes alone were a principal trigger of a contemporary African war. However, as Green has shown, the *interaction* of demographic factors with other issues, particularly the governance of land use, does appear to be a significant underlying condition in some cases. New evidence may emerge as this embryonic field of study develops, but the slow rate of demographic alterations makes it difficult to see how they could ever stimulate violence in the absence of other more important triggers. Once again, therefore, the effects of demography can be said to depend upon political context.

Climate

Climate and ecosystems clearly have a huge impact on human society. But to what extent does climate change provoke armed conflict? Security analysts have provided a range of answers to this question. One argument is that it is still too early to tell because our collective knowledge about these issues has significant gaps about the causal mechanisms involved.[93] Specifically, analysts need tighter coupling of climate change models and conflict models which specify different types of violence; far more representative case study evidence; and the ability to better disaggregate the effects of climate change in terms of geography and types of change. In Africa specifically, some analysts have pointed to the shaky foundations of much knowledge about the environment, as well as the speed, extent, drivers and political consequences of environmental change.[94]

In contrast, a second perspective views climate change as causing war through two principal mechanisms: by causing forced migration and

displacement which, in turn, may increase the risk of political instability and conflict, and by altering the availability of resources, especially water, fish stocks, or good quality arable land or pasture range.[95] While the latter claim is debatable, the former claim requires there to be something especially dangerous about climate-induced migration (as opposed to other types), yet this has not been proven.

A third, more nuanced argument is that climate change increases the risk of armed conflict and can be one ingredient for war when combined with a combustible mix of other factors. Thomas Homer-Dixon's project, for example, concluded that environmental scarcity was a significant independent variable in the explanation of armed conflict. Specifically, the interaction between scarcity of renewable resources, such as cropland and rivers, and tense social conditions provoked by population displacement or economic decline could lead to intra-state armed conflict.[96] This raises the question of how much work climate change is doing compared to these other factors. Similarly, a study by eleven retired US generals and admirals described climate change as a 'threat multiplier for instability in some of the world's most volatile regions'.[97] This suggests that climate change can make bad situations worse, but the multiplier idea implies that these regions are already volatile before significant climate change occurs.

With regard to Africa, some analysts focused on a strong correlation between annual temperature variations and the incidence of civil war, while others agreed that the weather was crucial but that inter-annual variability in rainfall was a much more significant determinant of African conflicts than land degradation and freshwater resources (see below).[98] For others, the most dangerous ingredient was 'high levels of soil degradation'.[99]

A fourth position looks pessimistically to the future, arguing that although climate change has not yet caused armed conflict, it will.[100] Specifically, it will generate four types of 'conflict constellations' – defined as causal links at the interface of environment and society which can lead to social destabilization and violence: climate-induced degradation of freshwater resources; climate-induced decline in food production; climate-induced increase in storm and flood disasters; and environmentally induced migration. The 'water wars' thesis (discussed below) is arguably the best and most commonly recited illustration of this perspective. The view that

climate change ‘will enhance the fragility of many African states’ by feeding ‘increased volatility in the region in the next few decades’ also fits neatly into this mould.[101]

Finally, there are those who argue that climatic factors have driven cooperative activities far more often than conflict, including encouraging natural resource management and conservation initiatives, such as Peace Parks, across political borders.[102] Furthermore, it is important to recall that from the early 1990s to the end of the 2000s, as climate change has accelerated, the number of armed conflicts worldwide decreased. More fundamentally, climate change cannot cause armed conflict because particular wars are always the result of conscious action taken by specific actors, not structural/contextual processes.[103] Putative evidence of climate change wars is thus really a collection of ‘theories that have intuitive appeal but empirically fail to convince’.[104] In sum, although the risk of armed conflict might be made more likely by climate change, specific wars are always the result of the conscious decisions of groups of humans not the weather.

In this context, the war in Darfur has been the most widely debated test case, not least because in recent decades Sudan has experienced an environmental crisis. The region has significant droughts occurring every three to five years and its local ecosystems have been collapsing under the interrelated impacts of land degradation, deforestation and climate change.[105] According to the UNEP, while armed conflict has degraded Sudan's environment, environmental issues such as competition over oil and gas reserves, Nile waters and timber, as well as land (especially rangeland and rain-fed agricultural land), have been contributory causes of conflict, including in Darfur. Specifically, UNEP emphasized that twenty-nine of the forty violent local conflicts in Darfur since independence in 1956 involved grazing and water rights.[106] In addition, Sudan's massive, conflict-generated population displacement (affecting over 5 million people) caused significant environmental damage, especially in areas around the larger displacement camps. Desertification rates have increased significantly since the 1930s, with the boundary between semi-desert and desert moving southwards by an estimated 50 to 200 km, bringing with it reductions in food production and a greater threat of drought and floods. At the same time, pressures on resources in general and the rangelands in particular were intensified by the

country's rocketing number of livestock (from 28.6 million in 1961 to 134.6 million in 2004). The picture in relation to deforestation was also grim: between 1973 and 2006 Darfur lost a third of its forest cover.

But how did this environmental crisis relate to the war in Darfur? Some analysts concluded that the war ‘can accurately be labelled the first modern climate-change conflict’.[107] A typical argument was that the region's fragile political situation was ‘exacerbated beyond the tipping point by climate-related factors’.[108] The key tipping point in this case was identified as conflicts between agriculturalists and pastoralists over ‘land and water resources’[109] – or what one observer called ‘the drying of Darfur’.[110]

An alternative view argues that, while climate change was a significant part of the structural context which made Darfur's war possible, it does not explain why war broke out. This was down to more contingent catalytic factors, including the central individual actors and their tribal, ethnic and religious loyalties; government policies; the breakdown of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms; the Naivasha peace process to end the so-called North–South conflict; the role of Chadian armed groups; and the influx of small arms and light weapons into the region.[111] As Alex de Waal put it, if there was a key culprit, it was the Sudanese government, not the weather.

In many respects the debate about climate change and the war in Darfur leads us back to the analytical distinction between underlying conditions and triggers. The complex brew of decades of social turmoil, oppressive governance, demographic shifts, and environmental crisis set the twenty-first-century stage on which various actors decided to prosecute the war. Environmental change was certainly not a necessary condition for Darfur's conflict, as even supporters of the climate conflict thesis acknowledge.[112] But the weather was one ingredient. To use a theatrical metaphor, the weather was more like a stage prop which affected the atmosphere of the scene, but it did not have a speaking part or determine how the characters reacted. As a contextual factor, how humans respond to climate change is politically open-ended. In situations of poor governance and conflict it is likely to be a threat multiplier or an exacerbating factor.[113] But it is fatalistic to think that this is the only effect it might stimulate: in situations with stable and inclusive political institutions it might just as well encourage

cooperation and constructive innovation. Overall, the Darfur case bears out Idean Salehyan's conclusion that ‘The overly structural logic linking climate change to armed conflict ignores human agency, ingenuity, the potential for technological innovation, and the vital role of political institutions in managing conflict (or failing to do so).’[114]

Water

While parts of Africa have an abundance of water, others suffer from severe water scarcity, which is likely to intensify with global climate change.[115] The dramatic shrinking of Lake Chad and Lake Turkana (in Ethiopia/Kenya), for instance, has on occasion led to tensions between some fishing and pastoralist communities who live around them. At the regional level, the primary concern has revolved around the allocation of the Nile waters.[116] Examples such as these have kept alive one variant of the resource scarcity arguments, namely, the ‘water wars’ thesis – the idea that water scarcity will eventually stimulate armed conflict. Historically, however, the evidence for this thesis is negligible. As a leading environmental historian put it, water wars ‘have not happened for several millennia, if ever’.[117] Indeed, given that more than 3,600 treaties have been signed regarding aspects of international waters, 145 of them since 2000, it is strange that water does not enjoy a more prominent status as what one analyst called ‘humanity's greatest learning ground for building community’.[118] In sum, there is significant evidence that building institutions, at the local, national and supranational level, is an effective strategy to mitigate water scarcity as a trigger of warfare.

The principal note of caution is that, although ‘the historical record suggests that with well-organized states, the probability of warfare arising from drought-induced water shortage is low; the risk rises in the presence of weak states within which those components of society most aggrieved by drought are less constrained in their responses.’[119] The number of weak states in Africa is thus a cause for concern. But, once again, this would suggest the key issue is governance in weak states, not water scarcity *per se*.

It would appear that the more fundamental explanation for the persistent strength of the water wars thesis is linked to human psychology, specifically

the fact that evidence from the past seems unable to overcome completely people's fears about the future.[120] No amount of historical evidence that water scarcity has not been a major cause of war either yesterday or today will convince some people to reject the idea that it will be central to the wars of tomorrow. It is therefore quite likely that the debate about water wars will continue to intensify.

Land

Although not one of the resources singled out in the quantitative literature on the causes of civil war, land is clearly at the heart of many African conflicts and therefore highlights the centrality of the local level of analysis discussed in chapter 2. As one recent assessment concluded, 'Violent land conflict in Africa is common, widespread, and deadly.'[121] Between 1990 and 2011, the Social Conflict in Africa Database identified 7,473 reports of conflict based on land-related issues.[122] But it is not just any land. Tensions have focused on the most useful parts of the continent, what French colonists referred to as *Afrique utile*.[123] This land, as Aboidun Alao has argued, is 'undoubtedly the most important natural resource in Africa'.[124] Naturally, different groups consider different pieces of land *utile* for different reasons. As discussed in chapter 5, potential national homelands are considered crucial for some groups for cultural or psychological reasons regardless of the mineral, oil or other commodities located there. For other groups, the land's utility will be directly related to its commercial value. As with other resources, the central point is that land has often been a critical enabler for somebody's political agenda.

Africa's land is crucial for several reasons. For one thing, because most other resources are found on or in it, control of the land is vital for many types of resource extraction and as an important marker of political authority. Second, much of the continent's economic activity remains based in agriculture, with all that this implies for the centrality of land. Third, Africa's land often has important spiritual and symbolic value as a sacred place that has been secured by generations of ancestors and should be kept for future generations.

On the more specific question of the relationship between land and armed conflict, violent land conflicts are often said to include 'any armed violence

that occurs between individuals or groups resulting from disputes over land access, land ownership, or the spoils of land cultivation'.[125] Among the most prominent ingredients in the outbreak of such conflicts are poor governance and the lack of effective dispute settlement mechanisms; the failure of states to provide populations with basic security; unresolved grievances over land access, including the forced displacement of some communities from their lands; as well as 'violence entrepreneurs' (elites, politicians, businessmen, etc.), who exploit such issues for economic and political gain.[126]

Analysts have observed a variety of ways that land ownership, management and control have been linked to conflict: scarcity of useful land, conflicting laws governing land tenure, boundary disputes and conflicting claims over specific portions of land, arguments over 'landlord–tenant' arrangements, racial imbalance of land ownership, the clash of spiritual considerations with economic and political realities, complaints over government regulation policies, increasing population densities especially when a rapid influx of outsiders occurs, and land–labour relations.[127] The result is that, particularly in the continent's secessionist struggles and in relation to much more localized struggles, control of certain pieces of territory was at the heart of conflict between and within groups from Zimbabwe and Zanzibar to Darfur and the DRC. As the African Union panel was regularly told by Darfuris, 'land was one of the root causes of the war … and it remains a key issue in future negotiations'.[128]

Pastoral Conflicts

Africa's pastoral conflicts sit at the murky nexus between struggles over water and land as well as ongoing changes in climate and demography. While media coverage of what Scott Straus has categorized as 'livelihood conflicts' is notoriously poor, the data collected suggests that they have been increasing, especially during the 2000s.[129] Here, I briefly examine the dimensions of pastoral conflicts both in the abstract and with reference to some case studies from eastern and central Africa.

Pastoral communities inhabit over twenty-one African countries, with most in east Africa, the Horn, and Sahel regions. Pastoralism involves the raising

of animal herds (cattle, camels, goats, sheep and donkeys), primarily in arid or semi-arid lands. As a general rule, pastoralists follow the available resources to maintain their herds. For these communities, their livestock is a means of production, storage, transport, food and wealth. Historically, most pastoralists inhabited sparsely populated areas and regions where transhumance was adopted to maximize nutritional gain. Even today, many of these communities function outside of the administrative and security frameworks provided by states.

In this sense, pastoralists live at the intersection of three systems: the ecological system, the socio-political system of people and communities, and the geopolitical system of sovereign states. Factors related to all three of these systems thus form the main ingredients in pastoral conflicts, although they do so unequally. In recent decades, pastoral communities in Africa have become involved in armed conflicts with other pastoral communities and with sedentary populations, sometimes including state governments.[130] The increase in such conflicts can be ascribed to the fact that pastoral systems in parts of Africa have been ruptured by the complex *interaction* between climatic and demographic factors as well as inappropriate political interventions. 'Ecological conditions in pastoral areas are by definition precarious'.[131] However, the recent intensification of the dynamics of global climate change has made the ecosystem less forgiving in many parts of Africa. Perhaps most notably, some pastoral habitats have been altered by desertification narrowing pasture belts and reducing rangeland. Demographic increases in sedentary and urban populations, and the consequent demand for more arable land, has encroached upon pastoral habitats. Governments in some African states have assisted this expansion by deploying irrigation schemes and changing land use patterns in traditional pastoralist areas. Concerning political interventions, many of these have been inappropriate because governments have often identified pastoralism itself as the problem and hence tried to incorporate pastoral communities into modes of sedentary life that fit better within the institutions and structures of the modern state.[132] In some cases, governments have deliberately inflamed the problem by arming pastoral communities either to defend against foreign incursion (e.g. Ethiopia arming the Dassenach in the 1990s) or to hinder the development of opposition forces (e.g. Sudan).

These interacting pressures have generated a variety of distinct forms of pastoral conflict in contemporary Africa.[133] Across all of them, the influx of modern weaponry has significantly increased the intensity of the violence and casualty levels. First, there are raids designed to increase or replenish livestock. Second, there are raids designed to steal and then sell livestock for immediate profit. This commercialization of raiding has been facilitated by improved access to markets, improved road infrastructure for reaching pastoral regions, and growing demand for meat from urban populations, which has sometimes led urban businessmen to pay pastoralists to steal cattle for them. A third variant is violence stemming from competition with sedentary populations. Although still the exception rather than the rule, tensions sometimes escalate to violence, usually because of the incompatibility of grazing and farming practices in the same space. Fourth, there are disputes over land tenure and displacement, especially where governments have encouraged more sedentary farming and displaced pastoralists from their traditional migratory routes. Finally, banditry and predation has risen in line with other conflict trends. There has even been the emergence of 'pastoral warriors', who became mercenaries for hire or simply engaged in armed robbery. These different variants raise the important issue that there is always a political economy of pastoral conflicts involving a range of actors beyond the communities themselves. In east Africa they frequently involve arms dealers, politicians and their private militias, government security forces, mercenaries, as well as civil society and I/NGOs.[134]

Of course, the motivations and ingredients driving pastoral conflicts cohered in different ways in different parts of Africa. Along the Omo river and Lake Turkana in Ethiopia and Kenya, for instance, conflicts occurred largely between different pastoral communities. Ecological pressures were particularly apparent in a region that regularly experienced large-scale droughts. Between 1980 and 2011, Ethiopia and Kenya suffered from ten severe droughts affecting an average of 6.5 million and 4.7 million people, respectively.[135] Around 8 million semi-nomadic peoples inhabit southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, including the Mursi, Nyangatom, Dassenach and Turkana communities who survive by following water sources along the Omo river and Lake Turkana. But between 1973 and 2010, rising temperatures and reduced rainfall saw Lake Turkana shrink and recede

southwards, to the extent that almost all the lake is now in Kenya.[136] This left the communities on the Ethiopian side of the border increasingly searching for resources in a foreign state, with all the political repercussions that brings.

Within Kenya itself, the Turkana also engaged in armed conflict with the Pokot community. These conflicts saw political as well as environmental ingredients playing key roles. These two communities possess the most livestock in northwest Kenya and by some accounts have engaged in raiding for more than 9,000 years. During 2009, the IGAD conflict early-warning mechanism, CEWARN, estimated that there were 640 conflict-related deaths for Turkana and Pokot county.[137] Between 2006 and 2009, it estimated raiding caused a net loss of over 90,000 animals. This is a significant loss considering pastoralists depend on animals for income, food security, as well as societal status. Raiding has also generated a pervasive spiral of insecurity among these communities, especially women.

In this case, raiding traditionally took one of three forms: mass raids involving several hundred or even thousands of raiders; 'adakar' raids involving dozens of raiders attacking one village or a *kraal* of a rival community; and smaller raids involving around a dozen raiders targeting an unprotected *kraal* or groups of animals. The latter category is rising, in part because of improved communications infrastructure, which reduces the attractiveness of planning and conducting larger raids, in part because of the growing prospects for commercialization of livestock, which has made smaller raids attractive to make a quick profit with minimal security risks, and in part because traditional authorities are no longer able to control raiding practices undertaken by some of their young men.[138] Each community has stated distinct motives for engaging in violence. For the Turkana, stemming hunger and drought were the primary and secondary motivations for engaging in raiding. For the Pokot, payment of dowry and accumulation of wealth were the principal motives, with expansion of land also considered important.[139] Each community has gained and lost in the process of fighting. Indeed, the only people who exclusively profit from these raids are traders and businessmen who gain access to inexpensive livestock, which they sell at a profit in urban centres. These traders are usually not members of either community.[140]

A third illustrative case of transnational pastoral conflicts involved Chadian herdsmen migrating into CAR. Here, political and military factors were the crucial ingredients in escalating levels of violence, which increased even before the start of CAR's crisis in late 2012. In Chad, pastoralism is the country's second largest source of income after oil, accounting for some 15–20 per cent of GDP and contributing to the livelihoods of about 40 per cent of the population.[141] Since the outbreak of war in Darfur, Sudan and the conflicts within Chad itself during the 2000s, the livestock of pastoral communities became targets for rebels and bandits alike. Pastoral communities armed themselves as a form of protection, which had repercussions when they migrated into CAR. Most Chadian pastoralists traditionally migrated to CAR during the dry season between October and May. They followed well-known, albeit undemarcated, routes. However, several problems produced rising levels of violence. First, the last two decades of crisis and conflict in northern CAR has, according to International Crisis Group, ‘turned these migrations into military expeditions’ to cope with the pervasive insecurity and banditry.[142] Second, now that much of northeastern CAR is officially covered by nature reserves, pastoralist migration can cause tensions with park rangers because their cattle may carry diseases that could infect the wild animals and some pastoralists engage in poaching. A third problem occurred after the war in CAR took an explicitly religious turn with the targeting of Muslims. Some Chadian pastoralists further militarized out of fear they might be targeted because of their religion. Finally, the Chadian army sometimes became involved in these migrations as a way to make money. Consequently, some senior Chadian military officers interfered in disputes in CAR to protect their hired cattle drovers. Pastoralism was thus hijacked as an opportunity for profit.[143]

Conclusion

Thinking about Africa's wars as resulting from the scarcity or abundance of natural resources suffers from a variety of flaws and limitations. Not least, these approaches fail on their own terms: they cannot explain why ‘an abundance or scarcity of valuable resources is not a necessary or sufficient factor of conflict’.[144] A more useful approach is to see resources as socially

constructed enablers – as means not ends. While resources enable and empower particular actors, they do not cause events. Their political effects are thus theoretically open-ended, although they are related to their historical context and the dominant political agendas therein. As the evidence presented here suggests, this seems to hold true regardless of whether the focus is oil, diamonds, demography or environmental factors. Inserted into a context where corrupt autocrats have the advantage, resources will strengthen their hand and generate grievances among those denied access to their benefits. Inserted into a stable democratic system, they will enhance the opportunities for leaders to promote national prosperity. Analysts should therefore focus their efforts on understanding the historical and political context in question, particularly its dominant systems of governance.

Resources were clearly not central ingredients in the outbreak of Africa's wars, but they were sometimes important for understanding how certain conflicts endured and why they assumed the forms they did. In particular, since the social construction of resources was usually directly connected to developments in the global economy, this tended to make Africa's warscapes more transnational, regional and global. If the resources in question proved profitable, they also made conflicts more intractable and provided disincentives for belligerents to pursue peace (see part III). The closest exception to this rule came in the case of Africa's intensifying pastoral conflicts. These were generally highly localized warscapes that emerged when a traditional mode of existence was put under increasing pressures from the interaction of ecological, demographic and governance-related factors. The next chapter investigates whether the same rule held true for one of the most important of all resources for Africa's political elites – sovereignty.

Notes

1 UNEP, *From Conflict*, p. 5.

2 Roudabeh Kishi, ‘Resource-related conflict in Africa’, 19 November 2014, http://www.crisis.acleddata.com/resource-related-conflict-in-africa/.

3 Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence*, p. 23.

4 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘Greed and grievance in civil war’, p. 564.

5 Collier, ‘Rebellion’.

6 Abdullah, ‘Bush path’, pp. 207–8.

7 Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, p. 219. See also Mueller, ‘The banality’, pp. 58–62.

8 Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors*, pp. 69, 249, and also 256–9.

9 UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG, *Experts’ background report*, p. 3.

10 Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence*, p. 11.

11 Ali, ‘The economics’, p. 242.

12 The phrase is from Ballentine and Nitzschke, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

13 Herbst, ‘Economic incentives’, pp. 276–7. See also, Reno, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, p. 13.

14 Global Witness website, www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/definition_of_conflict_resources.html.

15 UNEP, *From Conflict*, pp. 8, 11.

16 Humphreys, ‘Natural resources’.

17 See, for example, Thayer, *Darwin*; Gat, *War in Human Civilization*.

18 Mkutu, *Guns and Governance*.

19 ‘DRC: fish war prompts thousands to flee’, *IRIN*, 5 November 2009, at http://www.irinnews.org/report/86898/drc-fish-war-prompts-thousands-to-flee.

20 ‘Congo army retakes stronghold of western uprising’, *Reuters*, 14 December 2009, http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFJOE5BE01R20091215.

21 Moisés Naím, ‘Oil can be a curse on poor nations’, *Financial Times*, 18 August 2009, p. 7; emphasis added.

22 Ballentine and Nitzschke, ‘Introduction’, p. 3; emphasis added.

23 See Le Billon, ‘The political ecology’.

24 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘The political economy of secession’.

25 Ross, ‘How do natural resources’, p. 56.

26 Ibid., p. 58.

27 Ibid., p. 59.

28 Ross, ‘A closer look’, p. 267.

29 For evidence, see Nest with Grignon and Kisangani, *The Democratic Republic of Congo*.

30 See UN Security Council, *Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation*.

31 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the economic causes’, pp. 568–9.

32 Cramer, *Civil War*, pp. 121–2.

33 The six emergencies in non-mineral dominant economies were Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Sudan, Somalia and South Africa. The highest casualty figures of all the African cases were in Rwanda and Burundi.

34 Le Billon, ‘The political ecology’, p. 564.

35 Ibid., pp. 568, 575–6.

36 Garrett, Mitchell and Lintzer, *Promoting Legal*, p. 35.

37 Østby, Nordås and Rød, ‘Regional inequalities’.

38 Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, p. 24.

39 Kahl, ‘Population growth’.

40 On the specific case of oil wealth and governance, see Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics*, pp. 32–5.

41 See also the findings of the Political Instability Task Force discussed in chapter 3.

42 Englebert and Ron, ‘Primary commodities’, pp. 75–6.

43 This is not an exhaustive list. Other natural phenomena that have been increasingly connected to the use of organized violence but are not analysed here include wildlife and narcotics. See, for example, Anderson and Jooste, *Wildlife Poaching* and Carrier and Klantschnig, *Africa and the War on Drugs*.

44 See Grant and Taylor, ‘Global governance’.

45 See, for example, Buhaug and Rød, ‘Local determinants’, p. 332; Østby et al., ‘Regional inequalities’, p. 315; Dixon, ‘What causes civil wars?’, p. 714.

46 Le Billon, ‘Diamond wars?’, p. 350.

47 Ibid., p. 365.

48 Richards, ‘Green book millenarians?’, p. 120.

49 Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Witness to Truth*, para. 17.

50 Cramer, *Civil War*, p. 124.

51 Global Witness, *A Rough Trade*.

52 Cramer, *Civil War*, p. 156.

53 Agger, *Warlord Business*.

54 This paragraph draws from UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG, *Experts’ background report*.

55 Ibid., p. 21.

56 See, for example, de Soysa, ‘Paradise is a bazaar?’; Fearon and Laitin, ‘Ethnicity’; Collier and Hoeffler, ‘Greed and grievance in civil war’; Dixon, ‘What causes civil wars?’, p. 714.

57 Ross, ‘A closer look’, pp. 267, 280.

58 Ibid., p. 286.

59 See also Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics*, p. 6.

60 Cramer, *Civil War*, p. 120. See also Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics*, pp. 36–7, 55–6, 79–83. Fearon and Laitin also speculate that ‘Oil producers tend to have weaker state apparatuses than one would expect given their level of income because rulers have less need for a socially intrusive and elaborate bureaucratic system to raise revenues.’ Fearon and Laitin, ‘Ethnicity’, p. 81.

61 This section draws heavily from Cramer, *Civil War*, chap. 4.

62 Cater, ‘Rethinking’, p. 29.

63 Cramer, *Civil War*, p. 160. The risk of this type of reverse causality is recognized in the general literature. Michael Ross, for instance, has asked whether ‘civil wars might produce resource dependence by forcing a country's manufacturing sector to flee while leaving its resource sector – which is location-specific and cannot depart – as the major force in the economy by default’. Ross, ‘How do natural resources’, p. 36.

64 Watts, ‘Petro-insurgency’, p. 639.

65 Cited in ibid., p. 641.

66 Ibid., p. 641; Watts, ‘Resource curse?’, p. 51.

67 Since 2004, the four largest producing oil states have received more than $2 billion annually. Watts, ‘Petro-insurgency’, p. 643. Nigeria's current constitution establishes that at least 13 per cent of revenues should be allotted to the Delta. In 2008, a government-appointed panel, the Niger Delta Technical Committee, recommended raising that figure to 25 per cent. MEND's demand is 50 per cent. ICG, *Nigeria*, p. 14.

68 This is the case in the oil sector throughout the Gulf of Guinea more generally. See Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics*, p. 77.

69 Watts, ‘Petro-insurgency’, p. 640.

70 Ibid., p. 653.

71 Cited ibid., p. 656.

72 ICG, *Nigeria*, p. 2.

73 ‘Oil theft in Nigeria: A murky business’, *The Economist*, 3 October 2013, http://www.economist.com/blogs/baobab/2013/10/oil-theft-nigeria.

74 Watts, ‘Resource curse?’, pp. 54, 60; Watts, ‘Petro-insurgency’, p. 643. This concept has applicability well beyond the Niger Delta. See Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics*.

75 Iliffe, *Africans*, p. 5.

76 Ibid., p. 4.

77 Brunborg and Tabeau, ‘Demography of conflict’, p. 132.

78 Kaplan, ‘The coming anarchy’.

79 Clapham, ‘The political economy’.

80 Dixon, ‘What causes civil wars?’, pp. 709–10.

81 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the economic causes’, p. 569.

82 Kahl, ‘Population growth’.

83 Boone, ‘Africa's new territorial politics’.

84 Kraxberger, ‘Strangers’.

85 Wood, Tappan and Hadj, ‘Understanding the drivers’.

86 Green, ‘Democracy’.

87 See Brunborg and Tabeau, ‘Demography of conflict’, p. 136.

88 Goldstone, ‘Population and security’.

89 Urdal, ‘People vs. Malthus’, p. 428. Urdal noted that, during the 1990s, urbanization was associated with ‘a significantly decreased risk of conflict’.

90 Urdal, ‘A clash of generations?’.

91 Green, ‘The political demography’.

92 Green cites P. Englebert, S. Tarango, and M. Carter, ‘Dismemberment and Suffocation: A Contribution to the Debate on African Boundaries’, *Comparative Political Studies*, 35/10 (2002): 1093–118; Buhaug and Rød, ‘Local determinants’; and Halvard Buhaug, ‘Relative Capability and Rebel Objective in Civil War’, *Journal of Peace Research*, 43/6 (2006): 691–708.

93 Nordås and Gleditsch, ‘Climate change’.

94 Leach and Mearns, *The Lie of the Land*.

95 See, for example, Schwartz and Randall, *An Abrupt Climate* and Welzer, *Climate Wars*.

96 Homer-Dixon, *Environment*.

97 CNA Corporation, *National Security*, p. 1.

98 On the former claim, see Burke et al., ‘Warming increases’. The latter was based on a study of civil war onset between 1981 and 2002. Hendrix and Glaser, ‘Trends and triggers’, p. 710.

99 Dixon, ‘What causes civil wars?’, p. 713.

100 For example, the German Advisory Council on Global Change, *World in Transition*.

101 IISS, *Strategic Survey 2007*, pp. 61–2.

102 Conca and Dabelko (eds.), *Environmental Peacemaking* and Ali, *Peace Parks*.

103 For a good critique of the simplistic and inaccurate claims made in much of the literature see Gleditsch, ‘Armed Conflict’.

104 Barnett, *The Meaning of Environmental Security*, p. 50.

105 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2006*, p. 156; UNEP, *Sudan*.

106 UNEP, *Sudan*, pp. 81–2.

107 Mazo, *Climate Conflict*, p. 74. See also the AU Assembly Decision, 29–30 January 2007, Addis Ababa, Assembly/AU/Dec.134 (VIII); Ban Ki-moon, ‘A climate culprit in Darfur’, *Washington Post*, 16 June 2007.

108 CNA Corporation, *National Security*, p. 16.

109 Mazo, *Climate Conflict*, p. 76.

110 Faris, ‘The real roots’.

111 de Waal, ‘Is climate change the culprit’.

112 As Mazo acknowledges in *Climate Conflict*, p. 85.

113 This is the argument of ibid. and the CNA Corporation, *National Security*.

114 Salehyan, ‘From climate change to conflict?’, p. 317.

115 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2006*, p. 57.

116 For a good overview, see Kagwanja, ‘Calming the waters’.

117 McNeill, ‘Can history help’, p. 40.

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120 Cramer, *Civil War*, p. 115.

121 *Small Arms Survey 2013*, p. 104.

122 Ibid., p. 125.

123 Reno, *Warlord Politics*, pp. 139, 35.

124 Alao, *Natural Resources*, p. 63.

125 Ibid., p. 108.

126 Ibid., pp. 108–14.

127 Ibid., pp. 64–110.

128 AUPD, *Darfur*, para. 136(vi).

129 Straus, 'Wars do end!', pp. 194–5. Citing https://www.strausscenter.org/scad.html. See also Salehyan et al., 'Social conflict in Africa'.

130 Abbink, 'Causes and trajectories', pp. 32–3.

131 Ibid., p. 27.

132 Bevan, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, p. 7.

133 See ibid., pp. 3–5. 'Raiding wars' have a much longer tradition, being one of the most prominent forms of conflict in African history. See Reid, *Warfare in African History*, pp. 4 and 7.

134 Krätli and Swift, *Understanding and Managing Pastoral Conflict in Kenya*, pp. 1–7.

135 Mengisteab, *The Horn of Africa*, p. 154.

136 *When the Water Ends: Africa's Climate Conflicts* documentary at http://e360.yale.edu/feature/when_the_water_ends_africas_climate_conflicts/2331/.

137 Cited in Schilling, Opiyo and Scheffran, 'Raiding pastoral livelihoods', p. 10.

138 Ibid., pp. 6–7.

139 Ibid., p. 7.

140 Ibid., p. 9.

141 ICG, *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism*, p. 3.

142 Ibid., p. 12.

143 Ibid., p. 13.

144 Le Billon, ‘The political ecology’, p. 565.

Chapter Five
Sovereignty

This chapter examines the extent to which issues of sovereignty were a key ingredient in Africa's post-Cold War armed conflicts. The basic argument is that the benefits accruing from sovereignty and the continuing importance of self-determination played a significant role in the framing and pursuit of a variety of African conflicts. In large part, this was because of the way various actors – including both governments and rebels – viewed the state as a major source of resources. Although the literature on so-called natural resources – analysed in chapter 4 – has almost completely ignored sovereignty, it is actually one of Africa's most important resources and has been fought over on a regular basis. As Pierre Englebert observed, ‘many of Africa's ongoing conflicts are not so much waged over the control of natural resources than over the control of the tools of sovereignty’.[1] Similarly, although self-determination could no longer be invoked as an automatic path to statehood and independence, the concept still resonated with marginalized minorities across the continent as a way of gaining increased levels of autonomous power. Stated more precisely, my argument is that Africa witnessed relatively few wars waged with the express purpose of creating new states (i.e. secession), but it has experienced a considerable number of conflicts fought with reference to the broader idea of self-determination – i.e. to make the existing states better places to live for their marginalized minorities.

The discussion of neopatrimonialism's exclusionary and unstable dynamics in chapter 3 emphasized how political life without access to the sovereign's patronage system was usually difficult. In extreme cases, excluded groups were left with little option but to use force, either to create a new state or to gain a serious say in the governance structures under which they lived. The latter option *might* – but need not – include significant reform of the state in relation to the decentralization of its institutions, provisions for minority rights, or autonomous regions. Evidence of both options could be seen in post-Cold War Africa.

Part of the difficulty in analysing these issues is that the meaning of self-determination in international law, and to a lesser extent in international politics, has changed considerably since the early phase of decolonization. Put bluntly, self-determination is not a right to statehood. Instead, it has become a much more limited procedural principle to ensure peoples can participate meaningfully in state governance. This helps explain why there have been relatively few genuinely separatist wars designed to break up Africa's existing states, but lots of conflicts fought about self-determination to make those states work better for the groups currently marginalized from power.

To address these issues, this chapter begins by summarizing the contemporary meanings of sovereignty, secession and self-determination. It then analyses the two cases of Eritrea and South Sudan, the only post-Cold War African examples of independent states gaining international recognition and membership of the United Nations. The third section then analyses three examples of conflicts which revolved around the unfinished business of decolonization and the struggle to build new states, namely, Somaliland/Somalia, Western Sahara/Morocco and Cabinda/Angola. In each of these cases the imperial powers were African rather than European governments. The fourth section then discusses conflicts where rebels frequently invoked secession but once at the negotiating table became focused not on the creation of a new state but making the existing one a better place to live for at least some of its marginalized inhabitants. Although often wrapped up in the language of separatism, these conflicts were really about self-determination in its procedural sense – that is, gaining a greater say in the running of the state but leaving its international boundaries intact. Illustrations are used from the Casamance conflict in Senegal and the struggles of the Tuaregs in Mali and Niger. Finally, the exceptional case of Ethiopia is also considered because of its unusually high number of conflicts with separatist dimensions.

Sovereignty, Secession and Self-Determination

Few grievances are as politically powerful as the feeling of being oppressed by foreigners. As the principal means to reject imperial rule, what role has

the idea of self-determination played in Africa's armed conflicts? To understand the relevant dynamics it is necessary to clarify the meaning of three important and interrelated concepts: sovereignty, secession and self-determination.

Sovereignty is intimately bound up with the idea of statehood. In international law, the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States concluded that, to be legally recognized as a state, an entity required a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and a capacity to enter into relations with other states. Although additional attributes have been discussed since then, this core of prerequisites has held relatively stable.[2] More sociological definitions of statehood, however, have raised the bar much higher by including in their definitions a test of the government's ability to perform certain tasks. The most famous of these is Max Weber's argument that the acid test of an *effective* state was whether or not its national government could lay claim to a monopoly of legitimate force in the territory under its jurisdiction.[3] The problem with Weber's approach is that Africa contains numerous states which do not come close to meeting this requirement but which persist as internationally recognized states nonetheless. Indeed, for all Africa's weak states, the continent's international political map has hardly changed since the 1960s.

The answer to this puzzle lies in the fact that the legal and sociological definitions point to different elements of sovereignty, what are often referred to as its empirical and juridical dimensions.[4] Empirical sovereignty refers to the ability of governments to fulfil certain functions related to security and welfare and to exclude other states from their domestic affairs. It is essentially about how well governments can exercise control over the population in a particular territory. Juridical sovereignty, on the other hand, refers to a status in international law where a state is recognized as sovereign by other sovereign states and relevant international legal entities and its government is recognized as the legitimate, *de jure* authority. Understood in this manner, numerous entities, including insurgencies, can possess various attributes of statehood (see the discussion of the SPLM/A in chapter 2).[5] But, to be recognized as a member of international society and gain UN membership, juridical sovereignty holds the key. As Africa's failing states attest, as long as juridical sovereignty is maintained, a government's inability to control its territory, population and affairs does

not significantly endanger its statehood. And as the case of Somalia between 1991 and 2012 illustrates, states do not even require a federal government to continue to exist as states and UN members.

Secession is about the redrawing of *international* political borders. It occurs when a group of people acquire statehood by successfully breaking away from an existing state (or states) and becoming recognized as the sovereign authorities over their territory and population. Given the huge diversity of ethnic groups in Africa and the poor performance of many of the continent's states, the number of secessionist conflicts has been remarkably small (see table 5.1). They have also been proportionally less common in Africa than most other parts of the world. As Englebert noted, while ‘29% of conflict-years in [sub-Saharan] Africa since 1960 were secessionist’ the comparative figures were ‘84% in Europe, 47% in Asia, and 44% in the Middle East and North Africa’.[6] East Africa and the Horn have borne the brunt of Africa's secessionist violence.

Table 5.1 Africa's secessionist conflicts, 1990–2014

Country	Region	Years of violence
Angola	Cabinda	1991, 1994, 1996–8, 2002, 2004, 2007, 2009
Comoros	Anjouan	1997
Ethiopia	Eritrea	1990–1, 1998–2000[b]
	Ogaden	1996, 1998–2002, 2004–13
	Afar	1990–1, 1996
	Oromia	1990–1, 1999–2013
Equatorial Guinea	Bioko	1993[a]
Mali	Tuaregs	1990, 1994, 2007–9, 2012, 2014
Morocco	Western Sahara	1990–2014[a]
Namibia	Caprivi Strip	1999[a]
Niger	Tuaregs	1992, 1994, 1997
Nigeria	Niger Delta	2004
Senegal	Casamance	1990, 1992–3, 1995, 1997–8, 2000–1, 2003
Somalia	Somaliland	1990–1, 1992–2014[a]
Sudan	Southern Sudan	1990–2004

[a] Secessionist struggle identified but no record of twenty-five battle-related deaths in one calendar year.

[b] To the extent that the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998–2000) was about the demarcation of the border between them, this could be viewed as a continuation of Eritrea's separatist struggle.

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Programme, at www.pcr.uu.se/gpdatabase/search.php.

The most convincing explanation for this state of affairs is Englebert's argument about the international factors that dictate the rules for recognizing new states and the domestic make-up of most postcolonial

states in Africa.[7] First, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was founded in 1963 on the principles of ‘non-interference in the internal affairs of States’ and ‘respect for their sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State’ (Article 3). Moreover, in its Cairo Declaration of 1964, the OAU confirmed its support for *uti possidetis*, the legal doctrine that colonial administrative boundaries would become international boundaries when the political unit in question achieved independence. States could agree to redraw their boundaries through mutual consent but this doctrine meant that ‘any territorial entity unable to make a plausible claim for past colonial status does not have legal ground for recognition in international law.’[8] Since the African Union did not reverse this position, the contemporary rules for recognizing new states in Africa remain biased to ‘colonially-related territorial forms’.[9] This has limited the appeal of waging secessionist wars.

The second factor limiting secessionist wars was the domestic composition of most of Africa's postcolonial states. With the exception of a few former British colonies (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland), African states have not been defined as reflections of particular ethnic groups. That is, Africa is largely devoid of equivalents of ‘Croatia (land of the Croats), Serbia (land of the Serbs), Afghani, … Kurdi, … Kazakh, … Turkmeni, … Paki, … and other “stans” (land of)’. Englebert refers to this situation as ‘plural softness’.[10] As a result, most African rebel groups in such states had a rational incentive to fight for their share of (or total) control of the state rather than escape from it because all groups saw the state as a valuable source of resources. When such states were run along neopatrimonial lines, even the elites of otherwise marginalized groups could gain access to some of these resources. Where control of the state was defined in exclusive ethnic terms – as in Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia – this encouraged elites from other groups to seek secession.

To be clear, although international boundaries are fundamental to understanding both sovereignty and secession, I am not suggesting that a large number of Africa's conflicts occur simply because of the arbitrary nature of the continent's political borders. This is a common argument, but it ignores the fact that *all* international political borders arbitrarily dissect identity groups – although usually not as blatantly as some African cases – and all of them rely, ultimately, on the coercive capabilities of actors with

the power to make them stick. Borders can make life more difficult in various ways, but on their own they rarely cause wars. Similarly, the demarcation of new borders alone might not resolve conflicts between the two parties, as the cases of Eritrea/Ethiopia and Sudan/South Sudan demonstrate. As discussed in more detail below, my point is that, where these borders prevent legitimate cases of decolonization occurring, they are likely to increase the risk of armed conflict.

Self-determination is an altogether more complicated concept, not least because international society has imbued it with different meanings over time. It is also complicated by the prevalence of two powerful myths: that self-determination is about independence (i.e. it is broadly synonymous with secession) and that the UN Charter provides for self-determination in such terms. As Rosalyn Higgins has pointed out, neither view is accurate.[11] These myths probably emerged because, during the 1950s and 1960s, self-determination became bound up with the issue of decolonization and the idea that colonies had a right to choose independence, even though Article 73 of the UN Charter mentions only 'self-government', which is not the same thing. Self-determination gradually came to be accepted as a legal right in the context of decolonization, but it was never restricted to a choice for independence (the entity in question could join with another state or remain in a constitutional relationship with the former colonial power).[12] Self-determination also became associated with human rights norms: specifically, it became accepted that the right of self-determination was applicable 'to peoples subject to foreign or alien domination' as spelt out in the non-binding UN Declaration on Friendly Relations of 1970.[13] Higgins noted that the central point about self-determination was that it offered 'a proper range of options' for 'a dependent people and that they are given the opportunity to express their choice'. In sum, self-determination was about offering 'peoples' choice rather than simply independence.[14] Referendums became a common mechanism to exercise this choice.

Understood in this manner, a central challenge was how to decide which groups counted as 'peoples'. In sum, who was the 'self' in self-determination? Traditionally, international law had defined 'peoples' as all the people of a state, not as distinctive minority groups based on race, ethnicity or religion. This meant that minorities *per se* did not have a right of self-determination or secession.[15] Where minorities were in serious

jeopardy, international law offered them protection through guarantees of human rights and the provision of minority rights. The logic underlying this approach was, as Higgins neatly put it, ‘Virtually every minority has its own minority, and the fear and oppression gets pushed further down the pyramid. The lesson we must draw is that the right of self-determination is interlocked with the proper protection of minority rights – but that they are discrete rights, not to be confused with each other.’[16]

In the context of decolonization, however, the ‘self’ of self-determination came to be associated with colonized peoples. Hence international law considered decolonization an acceptable reason to recognize a new state. As decolonization continued, more and more governments that had achieved their independence became anxious to ensure that the norm of self-determination was ‘harnessed to, and not the enemy of, territorial integrity’.[17] As noted above, African governments agreed to this explicitly via the OAU's Cairo Declaration (1964), which confirmed their support for *uti possidetis*. States could agree to redraw their boundaries through mutual consent, but they were not required to alter their boundaries because of the norm of self-determination. Changing borders without host state consent was thus perceived as an act of colonialism. As Mali's president at the time, Modibo Keita, put it, ‘We must take Africa as it is, and we must renounce any territorial claims, if we do not wish to introduce what we might call black imperialism.’[18] Once Africa's new postcolonial leaders had achieved their own independence, they did not want peoples within ‘their’ state breaking away pieces of it.

Over time, therefore, international legal mechanisms firmly separated the concept of self-determination from secession (and thus from its association with a particular territory as well). The opinions of international courts reflect a similar trend whereby they declined to view self-determination as an enforceable right and instead saw it as a procedural principle.[19] Self-determination was thus reconceptualized from being a right for colonies to become independent to the principle that peoples had a right to be heard. Jan Klabbers summarized the process when he observed:

> Now that self-determination can no longer simply be construed as a right of colonies to independence, it has evolved into a right of peoples to take part in decisions affecting their future. … [Today,] self-determination is best understood as a procedural right; that is, entities have a right to see their position taken into account whenever their futures are being decided. That may not amount to a right to secede or even a right to autonomy or self-government, but it does amount to a right to be taken seriously.[20]

This discussion clarifies the legal fact that demands for self-determination can be accommodated within the existing state by developing decentralized governance structures and paying greater attention to minority and human rights of the people in question. Altering political borders is, as Arnold Hughes observed, ‘an extreme political option’.[21]

Africa's New States

In the post-Cold War period, Africa has witnessed the birth of two newly independent states, both of which became members of the United Nations: Eritrea in 1993 and South Sudan in 2011. Both were the products of long and bloody wars.

Eritrea

In May 1991, after a long and bloody war of liberation which lasted approximately three decades and killed some 60,000 of its fighters, the Provisional Government of Eritrea (PGE) was established. In a shrewd move it decided not to use its formidable military powers to create immediately an independent state of Eritrea. Instead it sought a lasting legal and political resolution to the conflict by acquiring the consent of its allies in the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and by announcing that it would create a multi-party system and hold an internationally sanctioned referendum on independence in 1993.[22] On 23–25 April of that year, over 99 per cent of voters said ‘yes’ to Eritrea's independence from Ethiopia. As it turned out, although this settled the matter of Eritrea's independence, it did not solve the problem of where the new state's borders would lie.

The legal basis for Eritrea's independence was rooted in the separate status it had under Italian colonial rule (it was established as an Italian colony in 1889 and fell under British administration in 1941). After much debate about what to do with Eritrea, in 1952 the UN approved the creation of the Ethiopian–Eritrean Federation. For Eritrean nationalists this was a severe blow: they immediately lost the UN as a forum to articulate their aspirations because only member states could directly express their views. Over the following decade Ethiopian authorities broke the terms of the federation and assimilated the territory within Ethiopia.[23] Addis Ababa suspended the Eritrean assembly and constitution and imposed Amharic as the sole language of the state and schools. In 1958 it discarded Eritrea's flag, and in 1959 it imposed the Ethiopian penal code. In 1960, the Eritrean government was downgraded to an administrative unit within Ethiopia. In 1962, Ethiopia abolished the federal system altogether and declared Eritrea its fourteenth province. These developments triggered an armed struggle by the Eritrean Liberation Front in 1961, initially spearheaded by Muslim elites, as they had borne the initial brunt of Ethiopia's attempts at assimilation.[24] But it wasn't long before Ethiopia's increasingly heavy hand alienated many more Eritreans. Throughout the campaign, funds from the Eritrean diaspora played a vital role in sustaining the struggle.

Although their legal case was solid, Eritrean nationalists faced huge political obstacles, primarily because of Ethiopia's deft international diplomacy, which managed to distort accepted international norms in order to contain the Eritrean demand for national self-determination.[25] In particular, Ethiopian elites depicted their country as a vanguard of pan-Africanism and the continent's liberation struggle. They also played on the fact that in Africa colonized peoples were often defined in a limited sense as those under *European* rule. Ethiopia used this loophole, as well as invoking fears of continental ‘Balkanization’, to pursue ruthlessly its vision of a ‘Greater Ethiopia’ to incorporate additional territory, notably Eritrea and the Ogaden and Haud regions. Thus during the era of decolonization Ethiopia managed to expand its territory and assemble what Ruth Iyob called an ‘empire state’.[26] Edmund Keller described Ethiopia as a ‘bureaucratic empire’ and its incorporation of Eritrea as an act of ‘late colonialism’.[27] This was all too apparent to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which was at pains to point out that Eritrea had ‘been occupied by a

neighbouring country. … Eritrea is not part of Ethiopia and we are not Ethiopians. *We are an African country colonised by another*.'[28] Even on the eve of victory the PGE was not convinced the wider world had received the message. It sent a memorandum to the UN in which it reiterated that 'The Eritrean case was a just struggle conducted against a coercive incorporation and not a case of secession.'[29]

Unfortunately, just a few years later it became clear that the demarcation of Eritrea's border with Ethiopia remained unsettled. After a series of incidents that generated tension between Asmara and Addis Ababa, including Ethiopia's rejection of Eritrea's new currency and arguments over sea access and trade, the conflict turned violent. It produced one of Africa's most destructive recent wars. After some earlier minor border clashes, on 6 May 1998 Eritrean troops launched an attack which took over the Ethiopian-administered settlement of Badme. Various attempts at mediation by the United States, Rwanda, the OAU and the UN proved unsuccessful, and by June 2000 the conflict had cost between 70,000 and 100,000 lives and displaced more than 1.2 million people.[30] Two peacekeeping missions, UNMEE and OLMEE, were mandated to monitor the ceasefire as well as the redeployment of the armed forces of both sides in line with the temporary security zone (TSZ) envisaged in the Cessation Agreement of June 2000. This was not easy: the exact location of the TSZ was not agreed until June 2001, and then only in principle rather than in practice.

In December 2000 the two governments signed the Algiers Agreement wherein the parties agreed to 'terminate hostilities' and 'refrain from the threat or use of force against the other' (Article 1.1); 'release and repatriate' all prisoners of war (Article 2.3); establish 'a neutral Boundary Commission … to delimit and demarcate' the disputed border between the two countries (Article 4); and establish 'a neutral Claims Commission' to address 'the negative socio-economic impact of the crisis on the civilian population' (Article 5).

When the Boundary Commission announced its decision on 13 April 2002, this was supposed to be 'final and binding' under Article 4.15 of the Algiers Agreement, and initially both countries accepted this decision. In practice, however, Ethiopia, in particular, prevented the implementation of the decision by refusing to allow UNMEE and Boundary Commission staff to

cross from Eritrea into Ethiopia. They also questioned the Commission's neutrality and refused to work with UNMEE's force commander, General Cammaert. Part of the problem was that the Commission's April Decision did not specify the final disposition of the settlement of Badme, which had been at the centre of the dispute. In March 2003, in a set of ‘Observations’, the Boundary Commission awarded control of Badme to Eritrea, a ruling the Ethiopian government rejected as ‘totally illegal, unjust, and irresponsible’.[31] The Commission responded that Ethiopia's actions were an illegitimate ‘attempt to reopen the substance of the April Decision … and to undermine not only the April Decision but also the peace process as a whole’.[32] The UN Security Council also passed several resolutions (1430, 1466, 1507, 1531) calling for Ethiopia's full cooperation on this issue. It was not until November 2004 that the Ethiopian government accepted the Commission's ruling in principle, but called for a ‘peace-building dialogue’ in practice.[33]

Believing that the process of legal arbitration had upheld its claims, Eritrea became increasingly frustrated with the UN Security Council's inability to enforce Ethiopia's compliance with the Boundary Commission's ruling. Over time, it began to place greater restrictions upon UNMEE, declaring in late 2007 that the UN force was in effect maintaining Ethiopia's ‘occupation’ of Eritrean territory.[34] The plot thickened when, on 30 November 2007, the Boundary Commission dissolved itself, declaring that it had fulfilled its mandate even though it had not physically demarcated the border.[35] Instead, it demarcated the boundary with reference to coordinates on a map but did not ensure that these coordinates were represented physically by pillars on the ground. Eritrea viewed this ‘virtual demarcation’ as an incomplete but ‘important step forward towards the demarcation on the ground’; Ethiopia argued that the Commission's demarcation coordinates were ‘invalid because they are not the product of a demarcation process recognized by international law’.[36] In July 2008 this impasse forced the Security Council to withdraw UNMEE, and since then this contested border has remained tense and heavily militarized. Eritrea's government has subsequently engaged in a minor armed conflict with neighbouring Djibouti in 2008, was put under sanctions by both the African Union and United Nations in 2009 for its activities in Somalia and in the

conflict with Djibouti, and became increasingly repressive towards its own people, earning a reputation as Africa's North Korea.[37]

South Sudan

South Sudan is Africa's second new state in the post-Cold War era, achieving its independence from Sudan in 2011. Sudan was one of the relatively few African states appropriated by one particular ethnic group, in this case northern Arabs. It was also a case where colonial forces – in this case Egypt – had first pushed the north and south of Sudan together in the 1830s, whereas the later British imperialists ran the south under separate administrative structures. Since then Sudan's various conflicts involved forces pushing for unity as well as divorce. By 2011 it was clear that the forces agitating for southern secession were victorious. Nevertheless, as James Copnall put it, 'Sudan and South Sudan are joined by more than a name and their people will have no choice but to write a joint narrative for many years to come.'[38] So far, that narrative continues to be bloody.

The long-running civil war in Sudan between the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) has come to occupy an unusual position in relation to self-determination and sovereignty issues (see also chapter 7). For most of its duration (1983–2005), neither side's leadership was focused on redrawing the country's international borders. For Omar Bashir's NCP Islamists, who had come to power in a coup in 1989, the central objective was to subject all Sudan's people to their version of an Islamic state. In contrast, the SPLM leader, John Garang, pursued a vision of using the SPLM as a vehicle to bring about a 'New Sudan' that would reduce oppression against all of Sudan's marginalized populations rather than break the state in two.[39] On the SPLM side there were clearly differences of opinion, with many of the movement's rank and file supporting a secessionist agenda. However, others were reluctant to frame the conflict in secessionist terms because it did not play well worldwide, and especially in much of Africa, where other governments feared what precedent a new southern Sudanese state might set. On the empirical side of the equation, the reality on the ground in southern Sudan was that many of the available resources were delivered by external aid agencies, and the SPLM was not adept at creating functioning parallel institutions of government. To this day the south of the country

remains an infrastructural and developmental backwater. As one observer put it, SPLM officials ‘formulate policies and demand recognition but, for all intents and purposes, govern nothing and have nothing with which to govern’.[40]

On paper at least, things changed dramatically with the signing of the so-called Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005. Among many other things, this provided for the possibility of a referendum on southern secession after an interim period of six years. However, in the meantime the CPA stipulated that both parties were supposed to work together within a Government of National Unity to ‘make unity attractive’ and hence avoid splitting Sudan into two parts. Over the next six years leaders on both sides faced considerable obstacles that ultimately made it impossible to implement the CPA and keep Sudan united. First, there were challenges related to implementing the hugely complex governance arrangements set out in the CPA, which specified no less than seven different sets of political arrangements for the south, Abyei, the states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, Khartoum State, Darfur, the remaining northern states, and for the east of the country. Another fundamental problem was how to share Sudan's most vital source of wealth: oil. While most of Sudan's functioning oil wells were located in the south and the contested area of Abyei, the infrastructure for transporting the oil to Port Sudan to sell in international markets was controlled by the government in Khartoum. Bickering over the problems generated by these circumstances began almost immediately and a durable solution was never implemented. The most deadly flashpoint was Abyei area, which not only straddled the envisaged border between north and south Sudan, but experienced regular seasonal conflicts between the nomadic, Arabic Misseriya and the local Dinka populations, who had fought on different sides during the civil war. Under the terms of the CPA, Abyei's population was supposed to hold a referendum on whether to remain in Sudan or join the new South Sudan. At the time of writing (August 2015), that referendum had not taken place. Finally, John Garang's death in a helicopter crash in July 2005 probably rendered a united Sudan a practical impossibility. Having been the key spokesman for the ‘New Sudan’ and probably the only southern politician with the status and capabilities to maintain a position of vice-president or even president in a united Sudan, Garang's death left a void that was quickly filled by secessionist voices.

As a result of these and other problems, neither party to the CPA really tried hard to make unity attractive. Instead, most leading political and military elites in the north and south retreated to more familiar, insular and venal political agendas to secure their positions on either side of the impending but undemarcated international border. In such circumstances, it was hardly surprising that in January 2011, 99.57 per cent of southerners who voted chose to create a new Republic of South Sudan. South Sudan formally declared its independence on 9 July 2011 and was admitted into the United Nations just five days later.

As a political settlement to an African civil war that explicitly included an option for secession, the CPA represents the exception rather than the rule (see chapter 9). The conflict also ran in the opposite direction to most African conflicts which, as the Casamance and Tuareg and perhaps the Western Sahara and Cabinda cases illustrate, may start with some separatist aspirations but usually end up only with self-determination options within the existing state. Despite not being a separate colony, the juridical dimension of sovereignty was open to the southern Sudanese because, officially at least, the secession took place with the consent of Sudan's government. In this sense, South Sudan's separation from the north did not represent a departure from the established rules of creating new African states. Consequently, it is unlikely to set much of a precedent, either in Africa or beyond. As Englebert concluded, ‘the conditions that led to the independence of South Sudan are not present anywhere else on the continent, and it is thus unlikely that it will elicit any significant imitation, much less open a Pandora's Box of continental separatism.’[41]

The National Liberation Struggle Continues

Despite decades of decolonization and the end of the Cold War, Africa began the 1990s with at least five cases of unfinished decolonization, where issues of sovereignty and self-determination were likely to be at the forefront of any conflicts.[42] In addition to Ethiopia's incorporation of Eritrea, these centred on apartheid South Africa's control of Namibia and its own non-white population; Morocco's obstruction of a referendum on self-determination for Western Sahara; Somaliland's struggle to become a recognized state for the second time; and Angola's efforts to quash

separatist initiatives in the enclave of Cabinda. As discussed above, Eritrea's struggle for independence eventually succeeded. Similarly, the Namibian struggle for independence was all but over by the time the Cold War ended and so need not detain us here. And while the unravelling of apartheid took a few more years, it did not generate calls for a redrawing of South Africa's international borders – indeed, it was only the apartheid government's experiments with so-called national homelands that tried to redraw the country's international borders. In contrast, armed groups in Somaliland, Western Sahara and Cabinda all called for international political maps to be redrawn and were formed around the explicit idea of creating a new state. Each of these conflicts continued at a greater or lesser degree of intensity throughout the entire post-Cold War period and thus form the focus of this section. None of them were entirely successful.

Somaliland

Unlike Eritrea and South Sudan, Somaliland failed to achieve juridical sovereignty but made huge strides on the empirical side of the equation, especially when compared with the rest of Somalia. On 26 June 1960, Somaliland gained its independence from Britain and was recognized by thirty-five states, including the United States. Five days later the area of Italian Somalia was given its independence. The legislatures from the two territories decided to unify with the southern city of Mogadishu as the capital. The main northern political party, the Somali National League, boycotted the subsequent referendum on unification. Three decades later, in May 1991, the Declaration of the Conference on Somaliland Communities declared the Republic of Somaliland independent for the second time. The trigger for this declaration was the brutal repression of Somalilanders carried out in the preceding years by Siad Barre's regime, which claimed to be responding to an insurgency led by the Somali National Movement (SNM) campaign. Barre's attacks are thought to have generated an estimated 20,000 casualties and 1 million refugees.

The legal basis for Somaliland's struggle for statehood rests on its separate colonial identity. The political evidence used to bolster this claim has assumed many forms, but chief among them is the fact that the state of Somalia functioned only for the thirty years between 1960 and 1990. Even then, many commentators have questioned whether it existed as a

meaningful polity before its collapse. As one long-time observer put it, Somalia was only ever a ‘toxic state’ which gave its citizens oppression, not protection.[43] Since 1991 Somaliland had developed many aspects of empirical sovereignty: a constitution and political parties as well as internal conflicts (in 1992 and 1996). It had a defined territory (despite the odd border dispute with its eastern neighbour, Puntland), it had a population who identified themselves as Somalilanders, and it engaged in a range of international relations from diplomacy to civil aviation. It also elected a president who was not a member of the dominant (Isaaq) clan and formed a national government that provided security for its people, exercised significant control over its borders, managed public assets, levied taxes, issued currency and driving licences, and formulated development policies.[44] All this was done without the benefits of juridical sovereignty and funded primarily by remittances from the Somaliland diaspora. These were vital, but the country remained poor, with revenues of only about $20 to $30 million a year, far too little to meet the costs of public administration.[45] On the positive side, Mark Bradbury observed that this ‘internally generated process of recovery’ helped ‘to forge a separate identity, a feeling of self-reliance and a belief amongst Somalilanders that “Somaliland is becoming a reality”’.[46]

In 2002, the Somaliland authorities formally invited the African Union to assess its suitability for membership of the continental organization. The AU Commission fact-finding mission that investigated this question three years later concluded that Somaliland's case was ‘unique and self-justified in African political history’ and would not open the door to other secessionist claims on the continent.[47] The mission recommended that the AU ‘should find a special method of dealing with this outstanding case’ as soon as possible. In December 2005, Somaliland's President Rayale reiterated the view that his country was ‘literally a nation in prison’.[48] Despite some dialogue between the Somaliland authorities and AU representatives, the application for membership did not move forward. It was reported that some African states, including Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia, supported Somaliland's independence, but its immediate neighbours remained strongly opposed and held the key to recognition at the African Union.[49] Nevertheless, some international actors, including major donors, have not been afraid to involve themselves in Somaliland's

domestic politics, which is an exception to the usual rule when dealing with unrecognized states.[50]

In spite of its impressive empirical credentials and impeccable legal case, Somaliland still lacks juridical sovereignty. Although this case has not generated large levels of violence between the authorities in Hargeisa and armed groups in southern Somalia, it did produce sporadic clashes with the authorities in Puntland and raised a potentially fundamental problem for efforts to resurrect a single Somali state. Since mid-2013, Turkey has facilitated a series of talks between the authorities in Somalia and Somaliland, aimed at addressing their disagreements and cooperating on more technical issues, particularly the shared desire to weaken *al-Shabaab* militants. These talks broke down on a regular basis and have not produced a substantive breakthrough on the core disagreements related to sovereignty.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara)

A second case of unfinished decolonization in Africa is the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), commonly known as Western Sahara, and its struggle to gain independence from Morocco. SADR is also trapped in political limbo but for almost completely the opposite reasons to Somaliland. SADR has acquired juridical recognition from the African Union, which recognized it as a member of the OAU in 1982 based on its former status as a Spanish colony, and support from roughly seventy states.[51] But SADR is not a member of the United Nations. Nor do its authorities possess good empirical sovereignty credentials as they control only around 15 per cent of SADR's claimed territory and are forced to operate in exile out of Algeria.[52] As a consequence, a referendum on independence mandated by the UN Security Council in 1991 has never taken place, despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping operation to facilitate that very event.

In 1973 the POLISARIO was established as the vehicle for Western Sahara's national liberation struggle. Three years later, on 27 February 1976, the movement announced the creation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. Although at the time SADR lacked both the empirical and juridical dimensions of sovereignty, over time it has come closer than

most other unrecognized states: while UN membership remains elusive, it became a member of the OAU in 1982. Empirically, however, it has made very little headway, primarily because of the military stranglehold on its territory maintained by Morocco. As such, while it has not witnessed high levels of violence for some time, the conflict over Western Sahara remains far from resolution, leaving many of its people suspended in a political limbo.

SADR's claim to statehood rests on the fact it was not previously owned by either Morocco or Mauritania but was a colonial dependency of Spain whose people were therefore entitled to exercise self-determination.[53] Support for this position was evident within the OAU, which adopted a resolution at its Rabat Council of Ministers meeting in June 1972 calling for a self-determination referendum in Western Sahara. Western Sahara's case was given a huge legal boost on 16 October 1975, when the International Court of Justice issued an advisory opinion which concluded that it was not *terra nullius* at the time of Spain's colonization and nor was there any territorial sovereignty between it and Morocco or the ‘Mauritanian entity’. Morocco's (ultimately unconvincing) juridical response resided in its concept of Greater Morocco, which harked back to the eleventh and twelfth centuries when it controlled Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania, as well as northwest Mali and most of western Algeria.[54] It appears that Rabat's major political concern, however, is not the loss of prestige but fear of the domino effect SADR's independence might have on Berber militancy in the Agadir valley and the notoriously rebellious northern Rif region.

What Morocco lacked in the legal realm it made up for in its ability to create facts on the ground. Empirically, therefore, Western Sahara soon found its path to statehood literally blocked by two key developments: the Green March and the building of the berm. In November 1975, King Hassan II of Morocco led 300,000 civilians into Western Sahara in the Green March. They joined Moroccan and Mauritanian troops who had been attacked by POLISARIO. A military coup in mid-1978 ended Mauritania's participation in this war, and on 14 August 1979 Morocco officially seized the Mauritanian area of Western Sahara. However, Morocco's inability to pacify the entire territory led to the second key development: the building of a great wall known as the berm, starting in 1981. Even with support from Algeria, POLISARIO was unable to generate any real military leverage

over Morocco. Instead, SADR relied more on its juridical claims to statehood. These were impressive, and in 1982 the Republic was accepted into the OAU, prompting Morocco's departure from the organization in 1984. However, SADR was excluded from both the Arab Maghreb Union – founded in 1989 and comprised of Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya – and, more importantly, the UN. The door to UN membership was left significantly ajar, however, when in August 1988 Morocco and POLISARIO accepted, in principle, the UN-brokered Settlement Plan. This included provision for a referendum on self-determination and led to the establishment of a UN peacekeeping operation, MINURSO, in 1991 to ensure the plan's full implementation.

Since 1991, numerous peace plans have been devised, debated and rejected by one or both parties – most of them orchestrated by the special envoys of the UN Secretary-General: US diplomat James Baker (appointed in 1997 until his resignation in June 2004),[55] then Danish diplomat Peter van Walsum (appointed July 2005), followed by US diplomat Christopher Ross (in January 2009). However, the referendum on Western Sahara's self-determination has not taken place. The key technical sticking point revolved around how to identify the eligible voters and whether the eligibility criteria should be based on territorial or ethnic links (the so-called contested tribes issue).[56] Broadly speaking, POLISARIO wanted territory; Rabat wanted ethnicity. The key political sticking point, however, was the inability of the UN Security Council to marshal the political will necessary to see this case of decolonization through to its logical conclusion.[57] Morocco has refused to endorse a referendum that contains independence as an option, while the UN and SADR will not endorse a plan that excludes independence as an option. Since the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping mission, MINURSO, operate under a Chapter VI mandate, there is no legal basis to coerce either party into changing its position. Van Walsum had therefore suggested that, faced with continued impasse, Morocco and Western Sahara should enter direct, bilateral negotiations to find a solution. Such direct negotiations have not gained any real momentum either.

SADR thus remained tantalizingly close to acquiring juridical sovereignty inasmuch as it remains a member of the African Union, and the UN had officially opened the door to its membership but proved unwilling to force a

referendum on the issue. Today, SADR continues to occupy an ambiguous legal status in African and wider international society because it has lacked the material power to carry through its juridical entitlements.

Cabinda

Despite decades of struggle, Cabinda's separatist movement made very little headway in relation to either empirical or juridical sovereignty. The territory remained under the tight control of the Angolan government and there was no sign that this would change. What little pseudo-governmental apparatus the Cabindans built remained largely outside the territory. Often dubbed ‘Angola's forgotten war’, this conflict received little international attention with the exception of reporting by human rights groups.

Cabinda is a non-contiguous part of Angolan territory with an estimated population of between 300,000 and 600,000. Since oil was discovered off the coast of Cabinda in the 1960s the territory has provided a significant amount of Angola's oil revenues, estimated at about 50 per cent in the early 2000s.[58] The separatist movement, the Front for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC), has used its estimated 2,000 fighters to wage a low-level guerrilla campaign since August 1963, first against the Portuguese and later against the Angolan government. It was dealt a severe blow in late 2002 when some 30,000 Angolan troops deployed to the region after they had defeated the UNITA rebels. With the destruction of several FLEC bases in Congo-Brazzaville and the DRC and losses within Cabinda itself, various Angolan government representatives were quick to proclaim FLEC's defeat.[59] While it became clear this was not the case, the government again declared the war officially over in August 2006, when it signed a Memorandum of Understanding with a senior figure who claimed to represent the two main FLEC factions. The memorandum included an amnesty, a demobilization and reintegration programme for former FLEC combatants, and government posts for some former FLEC officials. It was rejected by the FLEC-FAC (Cabindan Armed Forces) faction, however, which continued its violent struggle.

FLEC's claim to statehood is that Cabinda was never a part of Angola. Clearly Cabinda has no geographic border with Angola, but the key legal point is that it was a separate Portuguese colony and hence entitled to

independence. The argument is that it became a Portuguese Protectorate with the signing of the Treaty of Simulambuco in 1885 at the Berlin Conference, becoming known as the Portuguese Congo from about 1900 onwards. In its 1996 Charter, the self-declared government of the Republic of Cabinda emphasizes two further points: first, that Cabinda was recognized as distinct from Angola in the 1933 Portuguese Constitution; and, second, that in 1964 the OAU recognized it as being a decolonized African country, distinct from Angola. In 1956 Portugal joined the administration of its Protectorate of Cabinda to that of its Colony of Angola. In 1975 Cabinda was incorporated into independent Angola. In January 2010 the conflict briefly hit the international headlines when FLEC fighters claimed responsibility for attacking the convoy transporting Togo's football team to an Africa Cup of Nations match. Since then, however, there have been few major developments. The last recorded violent incidents occurring between FLEC and the Angolan army were in the forests of DRC during 2011 and 2012, with some minor incidents of FLEC engaging in violence against civilians in Cabinda during 2012.[60] One recent analysis concluded that the separatist struggle in Cabinda had ‘largely dwindled to insignificance’.[61]

Self-determination without Separatism

As discussed above, contemporary self-determination is basically about ensuring that groups have a meaningful say in how they are governed. It is not synonymous with political independence and separatism. This distinction is crucial for understanding a good number of Africa's recent armed conflicts. For one thing, it allows analysts to cut through much separatist rhetoric and see self-determination struggles for what they really are. For another, groups that cannot make a convincing legal argument that theirs is a case of legitimate decolonization would struggle to acquire juridical sovereignty even if they could develop many of its empirical trappings. As Pierre Englebert has argued, the major impulse in such struggles is usually ‘to become the local dominant class’ and gain greater access to the benefits of sovereignty rather than build a new state. Challenging the government is therefore a way of also challenging the local dominant group by persuading the former to downgrade the status of the

latter in light of the armed struggle.[62] In the following section I show how this accurately reflects what has happened in two relevant cases centred on the Casamance conflict in Senegal and the struggles of various Tuareg groups in Mali and Niger. I then briefly discuss the exceptional case of Ethiopia, the African state where the relationship between self-determination and separatism has been particularly complicated.

Casamance

The Casamance region of southwest Senegal south of Gambia is home to approximately 1.1 million people.[63] As in the rest of Senegal, the majority of its people are Muslims, but religious difference has not been a major political issue. Since 1982 the region has been the focal point of a struggle which has often been couched in explicitly separatist terms spearheaded by the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (MFDC). Interestingly, when the MFDC was founded in 1947 it was *not* seen as a separatist movement. The struggle turned violent in the late 1980s as the MFDC began using its armed wing – the Attika, meaning 'warrior' in Diola – which had been formed in 1985. Although it never posed a strategic threat to the Senegalese authorities, the Attika attracted particular notoriety for its use of suicide attacks and 'a scorched-earth policy, including widespread and anarchic minelaying with no mapping' in 1997.[64] This had a devastating effect on local fishermen and farmers. The Movement also became associated with armed robbery and the illicit trade in timber, cashews and cannabis, and during 1998 got directly involved in fighting Senegalese troops in neighbouring Guinea-Bissau. In 2004 the MFDC's fighters were estimated to number between 2,000 and 4,000.[65] Estimates of the conflict's intensity suggested between 3,000 and 5,000 people had been killed.[66]

Following a large MFDC offensive in 1990, the government concluded a ceasefire with the rebels. This was to be the first of several (failed) ceasefires in the following years as the violence stopped and started, reaching a peak of intensity in late 1995. It was during the subsequent series of talks throughout the 1990s that the MFDC leadership began to split, primarily into northern and southern fronts, revealing rifts over the central purposes of the Movement. The central issue was whether to pursue

independence or better social and economic development for Casamance within Senegal. Gradually, the goal of greater development won out.

During the struggle two principal types of separatist claims were articulated. The first claimed the region had been attached to Portuguese Guinea before it came under French control in the 1860s. However, the MFDC's juridical argument was dealt a severe blow in 1993 after its leaders agreed to the appointment of a French expert to examine the historical merits of the case. The expert ruled that Casamance was never autonomous or a protectorate during the colonial era.[67] This left the MFDC unable to invoke convincingly the principle of decolonization separate from Senegal. It did not, however, alter the logic of Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, the Movement's leader, who carried on much as before. In contrast, external commentators described Senghor's basic position as little more than ‘an ill-formed and unrealizable demand for independence’.[68] Independence had always been a pipe dream, but without a credible legal case it was simply ‘out of the question’.[69] This meant that the Movement's leading intellectuals generally fell back on a second set of ethnic, cultural and economic arguments to justify separatism from the *nordistes* (the northern Senegalese).[70] The argument here was that the region's majority Diola people are more closely related to ethnic groups in Gambia and northwest Guinea-Bissau than the Wolof people who are dominant in Senegal. The MFDC's grievances were primarily economic and cultural, as Senegalese authorities essentially deprived the rising Casamance elites from participating in the benefits of state resources.

By the late 1990s it was evident that the MFDC was making little headway in relation to either empirical or juridical sovereignty. Englebert suggests that this is not surprising because it had ceased to be a genuinely separatist movement years earlier. Pointing to the Movement's splits, the fact that many of its senior leadership had only tenuous links to the region, and that so many of them were receptive to Senegalese offers of money in exchange for abandoning their separatist claims, he concluded that the MFDC was more a vehicle for ‘the formation of a local dominant political class [than] it was about the assertion of cultural identity’. In sum, Englebert saw the MFDC as a way for its senior figures ‘to achieve elite status and benefit from sovereignty’.[71] To these reasonable points it should also be added that, from the government's perspective, the long-running conflict became an

increasing source of embarrassment for President Wade, especially when he became one of the principal architects of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and tried to mediate in other West African conflicts, such as that in Côte d'Ivoire. The relatively low level of damage the MFDC had inflicted on Senegal's economy and its cultural pluralism, combined with the potential dent to Wade's image, meant that the government was reasonably forthcoming with offers to resolve the problem.[72] These lay not in redrawing international boundaries but in giving MFDC elites greater access to the benefits of sovereignty within Senegal.

Tuaregs in Mali and Niger

A similar picture emerges from the struggles of Tuaregs in Mali and Niger. The Tuareg are a nomadic Berber people spread across several countries of northwest Africa. In both Mali and Niger they represent about 10 per cent of the population, and as minorities in those two countries they certainly have legitimate grievances. As Englebert put it, ‘over the last century, theirs has been a history of decline, immiseration, and marginalization’.[73]

As a nomadic people, the Tuareg also found themselves in a rather unconventional position with regard to building a homeland. Nevertheless, Tuareg nationalists refer to their homeland as Azawad: an Arabic version of the Berber word ‘Azawagh’ meaning ‘Land of Transhumance’. Much of this territory is desert but it is also thought to house significant oil and mineral (especially uranium) deposits. Azawad does not have a legal claim to statehood based on its former colonial history because when France granted its African colonies independence in 1960, Paris did not grant separate recognition to Azawad but instead recognized Mali's borders as those of the former French Sudan, which had been drawn in 1891. While separatist rhetoric and aspirations have certainly been articulated during the numerous Tuareg rebellions in both Mali and Niger, the principal goals of most Tuareg rebel groups were to acquire a greater share of revenues from mineral resources, more meaningful political participation in their existing states, and protection against encroachment and environmental degradation of their lands.[74] To date, Azawad has not received juridical recognition from the African Union or major states. Moreover, once at the negotiating table, most Tuareg rebel movements have settled for various decentralization mechanisms instead. Unfortunately, these efforts have neither resolved ‘the

Tuareg question' in Mali nor ensured sufficient development for the marginalized population in its north. Advocates of recognizing Azawad argue it is the only way to resolve 'the Tuareg question' and to eliminate a dangerous haven for criminal and terrorist operations in northern Mali.[75] Opponents suggest it would 'likely be a source of further instability' and lament that Tuareg communities have not only remained divided amongst themselves but have been reluctant 'to acknowledge or accommodate the existence of the post-colonial state and its leadership'.[76]

In Niger, the government proved reluctant to compromise when faced with Tuareg-led rebellions. Violence began in 1990 with a series of hit-and-run attacks, followed by severe government reprisals and repression of the Tuareg. The Tuareg had called for a federal system granting ethnic groups a greater degree of autonomy in 'their' regions. Their demands were not outrageous or greedy: these people were poor and marginalized and wanted to be less poor and have a greater say in governing the region where they lived. They extracted some limited concessions at the Ouagadougou peace agreements in 1994 and 1995 in the form of more public jobs for Tuaregs and a bigger slice of the revenues from the region's mining industry.

In February 2007, however, a new Tuareg rebel organization, *Mouvement des Nigériens pour la Justice* (MNJ), attacked an army post in the Air Mountains. The MNJ demanded greater Tuareg representation in the Agadez regional government, more Tuareg in the senior ranks of the army, and a greater slice of revenues from mineral extraction in the region (15 per cent was promised to local communities in a 2006 law). President Tandja's government dismissed the MNJ as bandits and drug traffickers and refused to negotiate with them. The conflict escalated, and the MNJ said they would target workers of the French and Chinese mineral extraction companies operating in the region. In response, the government declared a state of alert in the Agadez region, banned all foreign journalists, deployed 4,000 troops and purchased Russian helicopters to support them.[77] Nearly 400 soldiers and rebels were reported killed between early 2007 and early 2009.[78] This was the end of large-scale violence in Niger.

In Mali, however, the fight for Azawad has consistently reached more serious levels. The first Tuareg rebellion between 1962 and 1964 was brutally suppressed by government forces whose excesses have not been

forgotten among the Tuareg. Since then, major Tuareg rebellions have taken place between 1990 and 1995, 2006 and 2009, and 2012 and 2013. The rebellion that started in 1990 involved many Tuareg who had lived in exile in the wider region and was characterized by low-intensity skirmishes. Some groups did call for the establishment of an independent Azawad, but after pressure from Algeria, which mediated the conflict, the Tuaregs' practical demands focused on regional autonomy. In this case at least, the state granted significant concessions in the form of the decentralization of government powers through two peace deals; the Tamanrasset Accords (January 1991) and the National Pact (April 1992). Following two further peace initiatives – the Bourem Accords (January 1995) and the Flames of Peace disarmament drive in March 1996 – these decentralization measures culminated in local elections in 682 communes in 1999.[79] Pierre Englebert interpreted these actions as an attempt by the Tuareg militants to win state recognition of their status as a local elite. Specifically, their goal was to replace the traditional chiefs, who they felt had been given privileges by the regime and marginalized the Tuareg. In sum, he argued, 'they fought the state to obtain concessions from it and become the locally dominant group'.[80]

The evidence since the late 1990s would seem to support Englebert's contention. The subsequent lull in fighting lasted until February 2006, when Tuareg rebels led by Colonel Fagaga deserted their posts in the military and called for the genuine implementation of the 1992 National Pact, which had not involved any commitment to separatism. Fagaga's group became known as the *Alliance Démocratique du 23 Mai 2006 pour le Changement* (ADC). By July 2006, Algeria had brokered the Algiers Accord between the ADC and the government. It granted special status to the Kidal region, created an interim regional council to oversee investment matters, set up military units recruited predominantly from the local Tuareg population, and transferred a number of the local military garrisons to local forces. This seemed to satisfy most of the rebels. But in late 2007 another Tuareg rebel group, the *Alliance Touareg Nord-Mali pour le Changement* (ATNMC), launched a fresh wave of attacks in the north, killing several soldiers and causing a number of civilian casualties. Despite further Algerian efforts to mediate an agreement, the fighting continued, and the government launched a more forceful response in early 2009.[81] It appears that the problem for the ATNMC and its

leader, Ibrahima Ag Bahanga, was not that their state-building aspirations were blocked but that their particular ethnic group did not do well enough out of the previous round of deals.

At this point in time, Englebert's conclusion was that, ‘In both Mali and Niger, it is misleading to think of the rebellions as self-determination movements. Secessionist desires are muted.’[82] The problem with his formulation is that it implies self-determination and separatism are synonymous when they are not. The Tuareg struggles did not ultimately hold out for separatist demands, but they were clearly rooted in the desire to achieve a greater degree of self-determination.

Two events outside Mali were to prove particularly significant in the next Tuareg rebellion, which unfolded during 2012 and 2013. The first was the formation of *al-Qa'ida* in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in January 2007. Formed out of the Algerian Group for Salafist Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and its predecessor the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), AQIM soon became an important player in the trans-Saharan trafficking routes and the kidnapping business, and began to engage with communities across Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, including the Tuareg. For an impoverished region like northern Mali, AQIM was an organization the locals could not afford not to do business with. One of AQIM's strategic objectives was to find a safe haven for its operations among Mali's Tuaregs – principally in the city of Kidal – and foment rebellion against their home state. By and large, it succeeded.[83] The second key development was the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya during 2011. This prompted the return to northern Mali of between 1,000 and 2,000 Tuareg fighters who had been operating in Libya. They brought with them not only considerable combat experience but also a wide range of materiel, including some large-calibre weapons such as anti-aircraft auto-cannons and MANPADS, which could be used against helicopters and planes.[84] As Englebert noted, this development ‘changed the dynamics of Mali's Tuareg separatism’.[85]

It was in this turbulent context that the *Mouvement National de Liberation de l'Azawad* (MNLA) was formed in October 2011 from the fusion between the (pacific) MNA (*Mouvement National de l'Azawad*) and the armed MTNM (*Mouvement Touareg du Nord Mali*). This meant that by late 2011 at least three distinct strands of violent conflict could be identified in

northern Mali: Tuareg rebels fighting for independence or greater autonomy; transnational jihadists (some of whom were Tuaregs) fighting to spread a warped version of Islamic law across the region; and militias and self-defence groups formed in opposition to the first two groups.

In early 2012, MNLA rebels overran the military bases in Aguelhok, Gao and Timbuktu in northern Mali. They also entered into alliance with jihadist groups including Ansar Dine[86] and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO),[87] and even AQIM. As the Malian army collapsed in the wake of these attacks, a group of disgruntled mid-ranking officers triggered a coup in Bamako in March 2012. This caused further splits within the army, emboldened the rebels, and highlighted the fragility of Mali's democratic institutions.

Once again, however, the MNLA's path towards a separatist agenda was blocked, as these jihadists turned on the other Tuareg rebels to dominate northern Mali: AQIM took Timbuktu in April, and by November the MUJAO had seized Gao while Ansar Dine controlled Kidal. At one stage, in December 2012, the MNLA was left calling for international assistance against its former allied AQIM forces in the battle for the eastern city of Menaka.[88] The jihadists' advance southwards was only stemmed by the deployment of a French military intervention, dubbed Operation Serval, which arrived in mid-January 2013 following a request for help from the Malian transitional authorities. This was followed by the accelerated deployment of an African-led stabilization force of over 6,000 troops, called AFISMA, which in turn transitioned into a UN stabilization mission known as MINUSMA in July 2013 (see chapter 10). The UN faced the twin tasks of trying to build a competent government in the south while simultaneously suppressing the rebellion in the north.

Since then, UN, French and Malian forces continued to come under attack from insurgents in the north of the country. A major assault by MNLA forces on Kidal in May 2014 prompted not only the retreat of the Malian army but also a flurry of diplomatic efforts to end the conflict in northern Mali and develop credible and effective institutions of government in the south. In July 2014, national elections saw Ibrahim Boubacar Keita chosen as Mali's president. By August 2014, French forces reduced their numbers in Mali in favour of a Sahel-wide anti-jihadist initiative called Operation

Barkhane. Once again, however, while some members of the newly established ‘Coordination Group’ (including the MNLA) pushed for a new federal structure for Mali, the peace talks generally fell back on delivering rehashed versions of decentralized governance without granting greater autonomy to the north.[89] Secession for Azawad, it appeared, was off the table once again. Malians will be left to watch whether the authorities in Bamako prove as corrupt and incompetent as usual and what splits will emerge among the northern Tuaregs. Moreover, if all sides continue to want a stake in the profits generated by transnational trafficking, it will make sense for them to acquiesce, if not support, a weak Malian state with security institutions that are unable to stop the real business of trafficking.

The Special Case of Ethiopia

As discussed above in the context of Eritrea's liberation struggle, Ethiopia's successful resistance of Italian colonization, its imperial tendencies towards some of its African neighbours, and its simultaneously leading role in the pan-African movement gave it a special position within African international society. In large part because of this history, its domestic political structures are also unique within Africa with regard to questions of self-determination and secession. Specifically, in 1995 the country established a constitution which gave certain units within it the possibility of secession. As a result of this unusual incentive to pursue separatist agendas, Ethiopia has accounted for a significant portion of Africa's secessionist struggles.[90]

During the Cold War, the Ethiopian state became increasingly centralized, Amharic was imposed across the country as its language and Amhara assumed a disproportionate place in its senior bureaucracy. The result was that Afar, Eritreans, Ogadenis, Oromos and Tigray all fought to break the Ethiopian state. In 1991 Mengistu Haile Mariam's regime was replaced with a coalition led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). In part because the Tigray had long been considered ‘the junior imperial partner to the Amhara’, ending Amharic dominance and inserting themselves atop the new coalition was more important than challenging the Ethiopian state *per se*.[91] Upon assuming power the TPLF engaged in a rare experiment in ethnic federalism, granting minorities local autonomy. The centrepiece was the 1995 federal constitution, which created ethnically defined federated

regions for the Afar, Amhara, Oromo, Somali and Tigray. It also stated that ‘nations, nationalities, and peoples’ within Ethiopia had the constitutional right to secede.

However, as the Tigray elite began to build and dominate its own neopatrimonial system in Ethiopia, so many barriers were placed upon the secession option that it became ‘largely theoretical’.[92] As Christopher Clapham observed, the constitution trapped the regime between two stools. On the one hand, Ethiopian nationalists were concerned that it set Ethiopia on a similar path to the Soviet Union and was little more than a divide-and-rule strategy for the benefit of the Tigray. On the other hand, representatives of the country's marginalized minorities ‘felt that the EPRDF had promised a level of autonomy that it had then totally failed to deliver’.[93] It wasn't long before some Ogadenis and Oromos in particular returned to insurgency.[94] Although none of these insurgencies posed a serious strategic challenge to the EPRDF regime, they reflect the unique dynamics which Ethiopian federalism has spawned. One brief example should suffice.

Formed in 1984 as an off-shoot of the Western Somali Liberation Front, the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) increased in popularity in 1991 after the ousting of the incumbent regimes in both Ethiopia (Mengistu) and Somalia (Siad Barre). At this point its members became embroiled in the corrupt neopatrimonial dynamics which characterized the relationship between the Region 5/Somali Region and the EPRDF regime.[95] After registering as a political party and competing successfully in the region's elections, between 1991 and 1994 the ONLF led the regional government. In 1994 the ONLF-dominated Regional Assembly resolved to hold a referendum on independence for the Ogaden. This did not go down well with the federal government, and in response the EPRDF regime dismissed the ONLF-led cabinet – replacing it with the more pliable Ethiopian Somali Democratic League. In 1995 the federal government also moved the Region 5 capital north from Godey to Jigjiga, where Ogadenis formed a minority. It was at this point that the ONLF began its armed struggle against the EPRDF regime, using guerrilla tactics against federal troops and officials stationed in the region. As well as support from the Ogadeni diaspora, the ONLF received funds and training from Sudan and, after 1998, Eritrea.[96] The ONLF has never posed a strategic military threat to the incumbent regime, in part because it has suffered debilitating leadership splits and in

part because it does not have total support among the region's clans for its brand of ethnic and separatist politics. There are no reliable estimates of its military strength, but it has engaged in some significant battles with the Ethiopian military, especially during 1999, 2000, 2002, 2005 and 2007. Also in 2007, the ONLF hit the international media headlines for an attack on a Chinese construction camp which was used to prospect hydrocarbons and was protected by Ethiopian forces. The attack reportedly killed seventy-four people, including nine Chinese. ACLED has recorded persistent low-intensity violence attributed to the ONLF continuing until 2014. The ONLF's most recent update on its military activities on its website (www.onlf.org) is dated 14 October 2014.

The lack of publicly available independent information about the ONLF has left even its central objectives murky to outsiders. As one expert on the region concluded, 'It is not always clear whether an independent state of "Ogadenia", a Somali Region under Ogadeni rule, or a reunification with a future rebuilt Republic of Somalia constitutes its main agenda.'[97] On the other hand, the organization's website claims it is fighting for 'self-determination, peace, development and democracy'.[98] Its Twitter account, started in June 2011, says the ONLF 'struggles for the exercise of self determination of the Somalis under Ethiopian occupation through referendum' [*sic*].[99] In July 2010 the ONLF foreign secretary stated that his organization's primary objective was to allow the Ogadeni people to choose their political future in a referendum, and that this might involve independence, union with a greater Somalia or regional autonomy within Ethiopia.[100] Given the importance of neopatrimonial bargaining in the politics of Region 5 and the menu of possible political futures, it is at least plausible that elements within the ONLF, like the Tuaregs and MFDC, are concerned primarily with using violence to acquire greater local political dominance rather than seeking to redraw Ethiopia's international boundaries.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, sovereignty and self-determination have been vital ingredients in some of Africa's longest-running armed conflicts. Not only has sovereign statehood been a resource worth fighting over, but

international norms of sovereignty, degrees of international support for secession, and the changing legal meaning attached to self-determination have shaped how some African armed groups framed their struggles and pursued their goals. Although genuinely separatist struggles were relatively rare and usually confined to cases of unfinished decolonization, it was quite common for marginalized peoples in African states to take up arms to achieve a greater say in how they are governed. While separatist conflicts are about breaking states to build new ones, self-determination struggles are about making existing states work better for their peoples. These dynamics were widely recognized during the Cold War.[101] They did not stop being true after it ended.

Notes

1 Englebert, *Africa*, p. 95.

2 Lowe, *International Law*, chap. 4.

3 Weber, *The Theory*, pp. 155–6.

4 See Jackson and Rosberg, ‘Why Africa's’; Krasner, *Sovereignty*, especially chap. 1.

5 See Clapham, ‘Degrees of statehood’.

6 Englebert, ‘Separatism’, p. 148.

7 Englebert, ‘Separatism’, pp. 149–51. But see also Englebert, *Africa*, Jackson and Rosberg, ‘Why Africa's weak states persist’; Clapham, *Africa*; Reno, *Warlord Politics*; Ellis, *The Mask*, p. 187.

8 Englebert, ‘Separatism’, p. 149.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid, pp. 150–1.

11 Higgins, *Problems and Process*, p. 111.

12 Ibid., pp. 113–14.

13 Ibid., p. 115.

14 Ibid., pp. 119–20.

15 Ibid., p. 124.

16 Ibid., p. 125.

17 Ibid., p. 121.

18 Cited in Kornprobst, ‘The management’, p. 375.

19 See, for example, the International Court of Justice opinions on Namibia (1971), Western Sahara (1975) and East Timor (1995).

20 Klabbers, ‘The right to be taken seriously’, p. 189.

21 Hughes, ‘Decolonizing Africa’, p. 864.

22 Iyob, ‘Regional hegemony’, p. 274.

23 See Englebert, *Africa*, p. 171.

24 Ibid., p. 172.

25 Iyob, ‘Regional hegemony’.

26 Ibid., pp. 266–8.

27 Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia*, chap. 1 and pp. 150ff.

28 Cited in Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle*, p. 127; emphasis in original.

29 Ibid., p. 139.

30 Adebjao, ‘Ethiopia/Eritrea’, p. 581.

31 Lyons, *Avoiding Conflict*, p. 8.

32 Cited in Adebajo, ‘Ethiopia/Eritrea’, p. 584.

33 Lyons, *Avoiding Conflict*, p. 8.

34 UN Secretary-General, *Report*, p. 5.

35 Ibid., p. 15.

36 Ibid., pp. 16–23.

37 See, for example, *Report of the Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea* (UN doc. A/HRC/29?CRP.1, 5 June 2015).

38 Copnall, *A Poisonous Thorn*, p. 1.

39 For an overview of the competing visions of Sudan's political future, see Deng, *War of Visions*.

40 Ken Crossley, cited in Englebert, *Africa*, p. 168.

41 Englebert, ‘Separatism’, p. 155.

42 This is undoubtedly not a comprehensive list, but it seems to me they are the cases that have generated the most armed conflict.

43 Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, pp. 2–3, 245.

44 Ibid., p. 4.

45 Ibid., p. 253.

46 Ibid., p. 6.

47 AU, ‘Resume’.

48 Cited in ICG, *Somaliland*, p. 2.

49 Kaplan, ‘The remarkable story’.

50 Caspersen, *Unrecognized States*, p. 43.

51 Ibid., p. 8.

52 ICG, *Western Sahara*, p. 17n98.

53 See Higgins, *Problems and Process*, pp. 127–8; Roussellier, ‘Quicksand’.

54 Roussellier, ‘Quicksand’, p. 320.

55 Interestingly, Baker accused Morocco of sabotaging his plans, his lack of means to impose a solution on the parties, and his lack of support from Zapatero's new Spanish government. San Martín, ‘Briefing’, p. 658.

56 Roussellier, ‘Quicksand’, p. 324.

57 See ICG, *Western Sahara*.

58 HRW, *Angola*, p. 8.

59 Ibid., p. 7.

60 ACLED version 5 (1997–2014), http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/.

61 Englebert, ‘Separatism’, p. 156.

62 Englebert, *Africa*, pp. 156, 168. See also Englebert, ‘Separatism’.

63 My account relies on FCO, *The Casamance Conflict*; Evans, *Senegal*.

64 FCO, *The Casamance Conflict*, p. 9.

65 Evans, *Senegal*, p. 6.

66 Ibid., p. 4.

67 FCO, *The Casamance Conflict*, p. 3.

68 Evans, *Senegal*, p. 17.

69 Ibid., p. 16.

70 Ibid., p. 3.

71 Englebert, *Africa*, pp. 158, 160.

72 Evans, *Senegal*, p. 16.

73 Englebert, *Africa*, p. 160.

74 Graeber, Harris and Hotra, ‘A strategic conflict’.

75 Livermore, ‘The case for Azawad’.

76 Zounmenou, ‘Rethinking the Tuareg factor’, pp. 19, 23.

77 Graeber et al., ‘A strategic conflict’, pp. 11–12.

78 ‘Niger seeks mediation with Tuareg rebels’, *Reuters*, 3 April 2009, at http://af.reuters.com/article/idAFJOE53301T20090404.

79 Englebert, *Africa*, p. 162.

80 Ibid., p. 161.

81 Graeber et al., ‘A strategic conflict’, pp. 9–10.

82 Englebert, *Africa*, p. 164.

83 Larémont, ‘Al Qaeda’.

84 *Small Arms Survey 2015*, chap. 6.

85 Englebert, ‘Separatism’, p. 154.

86 Ansar Dine comprised about 300 radicalized Salafi Tuaregs who broke from the MNLA, probably after arguments among the leadership.

87 MUJAO broke away from AQIM in October 2011, probably over disagreements over kidnapping ransoms and the dominance of Algerians in its ranks. Most MUJAO members were Malian (although there were not many Tuaregs) active in the Gao region. In August 2013, MUJAO merged with Mokhtar Belmokhtar's al-Muwaqi'un bil-Dima group to form Al-Murabitun.

88 Livermore, ‘The case for Azawad’, p. 289.

89 ‘A peace deal, against all odds’, *Africa Confidential*, 56/13, 26 June 2015.

90 For an overview of trends on the continent between 1960 and 2013, see Englebert, *Africa*, pp. 182–3 and Englebert, ‘Separatism’.

91 Englebert, *Africa*, p. 180.

92 Ibid.

93 Clapham, ‘Comments’.

94 The Oromo Liberation Front, although not analysed here, also conducted an armed self-determination struggle. According to ACLED data, it was engaged in deadly battles with the Ethiopian military from 1999 until about April 2012. See ACLED version 5 (1997–2014), http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-5-data-1997-2014/.

95 Hagmann, ‘Beyond clannishness’.

96 Shinn, ‘Ethiopian armed groups’.

97 Hagmann, ‘Beyond clannishness’, p. 525.

98 ONLF website, www.onlf.org (accessed 5 June 2010).

99 The ONLF's Twitter handle is @ONLFJWXO.

100 In an interview with the BBC World Service, at www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/2010/07/100729_ethiopia_rebels.shtml.

101 Kamanu, ‘Secession’.

Chapter Six
Ethnicity

Although all armed conflicts involve identity politics, people's ethnic identities are commonly held to be of greater significance than their other identities. Journalists and scholars both regularly use ‘ethnic’ as shorthand to describe a particular kind of warfare and the explanation for it.[1] It was also frequently claimed that ‘ethnic wars’ increased dramatically in the post-Cold War era. Stefan Wolf, for instance, concluded that ‘proportionally speaking more ethnic conflicts began in the last decade of the twentieth century than in any other.’[2] Talking about wars in this manner implies that there is something about ethnicity which, under the right circumstances, begets organized violence. This approach is not unique to African conflicts, but ethnic explanations have been particularly common in this part of the world.

But what does it mean to say that a particular type of violence is an ethnic conflict? And how useful is this way of thinking about Africa's recent wars in particular? The idea that ethnic difference alone ‘causes’ war can be quickly dismissed. If this were true, the world's many different ethnic groups would be in a perpetual state of conflict, whereas the vast majority of the time they not only live peacefully side by side but actively mix and procreate with one another. This means that ethnic difference *per se* is not the crux of the problem. Nor is ethnic similarity a panacea: as the case of Somalia since the late 1980s demonstrates, the fact that inhabitants share the same ethnicity is no guarantee of internal harmony. Analysts might therefore focus on ‘ethnicity plus’, where the ‘plus’ is some additional mechanism, factor, development, attribute or tendency that might explain the outbreak of organized violence where ethnicity appears to be involved. Among the usual suspects are manipulative elites and some sort of economic or political crisis, such as a sharp crash in commodity prices or the assassination of an important public figure.

This chapter addresses these issues in three stages. It begins by summarizing what ethnic identities are and how they have materialized in

contemporary Africa. It then examines the potential ways in which ethnic identities are related to armed conflict. Finally, the chapter analyses two important case studies of organized violence where ethnicity was often thought to play key roles: the civil war and genocide in Rwanda during the 1990s and the civil war in South Sudan which broke out in December 2013. Although Rwanda was unusual inasmuch as the Hutus and Tutsis shared the same language and religion and had high levels of intermarriage, it is a crucial case for several reasons. Not only was it Africa's most intense period of violent bloodletting since 1990, but more than any other conflict it has been depicted as occurring because of the differences between ‘Hutus’ and ‘Tutsis’. Yet, even in the eye of Rwanda's genocidal storm, the participants in this political drama did not always view ethnicity in rigid, primordial terms. Similarly, the violence that followed a split in the leadership of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in 2013 was often described in ethnic terms. Yet on closer inspection, the war was really a political struggle for power between one movement's elites, not an ethnic conflict between the Dinka and Nuer peoples.

The basic argument of this chapter is that ethnicity does not cause armed conflict; rather so-called ethnic wars are usually the result of political power struggles between elites whose actions do not simply reflect static ethnic identities but instead shape identities and the political consequences that flow from them. In this sense I agree with the sentiment that ethnic difference does not have a strong relationship with the incidence of armed conflict.[3] Nevertheless, the construction of specific ethnic identities to support particular political agendas has frequently been an important ingredient of Africa's wars. With this in mind, Lee Ann Fujii's work on the 1994 Rwandan genocide provides a useful way to conceptualize these dynamics by viewing official or state-sponsored understandings of ethnicity as a script for violence, rather than a direct cause of it.[4] The officially endorsed ethnic ‘scripts’ in Rwanda and South Sudan illustrate the connection between regime strategies and organized violence. While scripts can be propagated which facilitate violence either across or within ethnic groups, individuals and groups will respond to them in different ways, sometimes following the official script in letter and/or spirit and on other occasions departing from it to a greater or lesser degree.

What are Ethnic Identities?

Ethnic identities can be understood as ‘a kind of social radar, a perceptual device through which people come to see where they stand in relation to the human environment’.[5] Dating back to the Greek word for nation – *ethnos* – ethnicity usually refers to a group of people who perceive themselves as sharing certain ‘ethnic’ reference points such as ‘common descent, history, fate and culture, which usually indicates some mix of language, physical appearance and the ritual regulation of life, especially religion’.[6] As David Horowitz famously suggested, ethnicity is ‘the idea of common provenance, recruitment primarily through kinship, and a notion of a unique inventory of cultural traits’.[7] In the name of ethnicity, young people are often told who they are (and are not), what to associate with other ethnic groups, and what rituals and symbols are of consequence, including key dates, beliefs, events, appearance, places, dress, cuisine, etc.

Ethnic identities should also be understood as being simultaneously intersubjective, factionalized and relational. Describing ethnicity as intersubjective highlights the fact that it is defined through social interactions and is therefore a property of a group and not solely a matter of personal choice. Although individuals may try and assert their own understanding of ethnicity in particular ways, the group concerned is often the final arbiter of what will stick, and in this sense can ascribe specific ethnic identities to unwilling individuals. In the modern era, institutions of the state have enjoyed arguably the greatest power to ascribe political identities to their population. As Mahmood Mamdani noted, ‘If the law recognises you as a member of an ethnicity, and state institutions treat you as a member of that ethnicity, then you become an ethnic being legally and institutionally.’[8] Such a process of institutionalization was how ethnicity emerged as a key element in the discriminatory practices of many modern African states. This was exemplified by the identity cards that were issued by the Belgian colonial authorities to people in Ruanda-Urundi in the 1930s, in which they were identified as belonging to a specific ethnic group: Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. Viewing ethnic identities as intersubjective also means that, in terms of scale, conceptions of ethnicity must transcend face-to-face interactions and hence revolve around some type of ‘imagined community’ in the sense used by Benedict Anderson.[9]

Describing ethnicity as factionalized reflects the fact that no ethnic group is completely homogeneous; there are always debates – and hence factional splits – over the authentic interpretation of the ethnicity in question. As Milton Esman observed, factions ‘compete for the right to control [the group's] institutions and collective resources, to speak authoritatively on its behalf, and to represent it to outsiders’.[10] In Burundi, for example, the Hutu/Tutsi binary has only limited explanatory value for understanding the country's postcolonial conflicts. As well as conflict between Hutu and Tutsi, there were also crucially important intra-aristocracy cleavages between the old guard and the young modernized elite, intra-Tutsi rifts between the military and the political elite and, more recently, intra-Hutu disputes, as well as a plethora of regional and intra-ethnic differences across class, clan and personal lines.[11] Moreover, all of these contemporary dynamics were wrapped up in a more longstanding and malign process of mythmaking based around the history of genocidal violence in Burundi, which itself became a constitutive element of further violence.[12]

As a relational concept, the substantive content of a particular ethnic identity always develops in relation to an ‘other’. ‘Ethnicity’, Esman wrote, ‘has no meaning except in relational terms. There must always be an “other”.’ And, as I discuss in more detail below, he is also correct to point out that, ‘Where there is no other, identities and conflicts focus on kinship groups, regional differences, or economic interests.’[13] To use the Burundi example again, despite internal differences within its ethnic groups, the relational nature of ethnicity was brought to prominence once again in international efforts to end the country's civil war. Specifically, the process of security sector reform that created the new Burundi National Defence Force, Burundi National Police Force and National Intelligence Service was based on the fact that they could not be composed of ‘more than 50% of any of the ethnic groups as per the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement’. Similarly, the allocation of all command posts in these institutions was to be on the basis of a 50:50 ‘ethnic balance’ or ‘ethnic equilibrium’ between Hutu and Tutsi.[14]

In post-Cold War Africa, the most prominent ethnic identities have their roots in the modern encounters between colonial and local forces. These encounters were generally mediated on the African side by local chiefs and village headmen – individuals Bruce Berman called ‘local African

strongmen' or 'enforcers' – and on the European side by colonial administrators, missionaries and professional anthropologists.[15] While colonial powers routinely exploited the locals, their arrival also injected new sources of wealth and power into the continent, thereby intensifying ongoing local struggles over custom, power and property. Thus while they attempted to protect themselves against colonialism's destructive effects, Africans also struggled to take advantage of the new opportunities it provided. Since the imperialist's organizing script revolved so heavily around ethnicity – partly because many European administrators believed Africans naturally lived in tribes and partly because they tried to freeze identities to make administration easier – colonialism encouraged Africans to think ethnically as well.

For Berman, some of the most important characteristics of these emerging ethnicities were their stress on common culture, language and descent; the importance accorded to customary law, with the central issues being defining communal membership, gender relations, access to land and control of labour and resources; their predominantly masculine and patriarchal character; and their 'invented histories and noble lies', which usually attempted to justify the exigencies of current political struggles.[16] As discussed in more detail in chapter 7, in some cases religious beliefs also played an important part in influencing group dynamics and individual behaviour.

Ethnicities and War

To what extent are so-called ethnic conflicts actually about ethnicity? A reasonable place to start is with the contemporary IR literature, which has generated a variety of general hypotheses about ethnicity and war. Those espousing a primordial conception of ethnicity have argued that hatreds between ethnic groups persist over generations until something triggers an eruption of mass violence against the despised group.[17] Those analysts who view ethnicity in more instrumental terms, however, have argued that violence occurs when power-hungry elites manipulate a variety of institutions to encourage widespread fear of some other ethnicity and create incentives for publics to take ostensibly defensive measures to ward off the source of the threat.[18] In a similar vein, constructivists have argued that it is

symbolic politics and emotions that matter most, because the content of our ethnicity can change over time. Rather than a natural, rigid set of attributes, each ethnic group is defined by a ‘myth–symbol complex’ that identifies which elements of shared culture and what interpretations of history bind the group together and distinguish it from others. Extreme violence results from group myths that justify hostility, fears of group extinction and chauvinist mobilization.[19]

At the quantitative end of the spectrum, a recent study which claimed to cover all politically relevant ethnic groups worldwide between 1946 and 2005 concluded that ethnic groups are more likely to rebel when (1) more representatives of that ethnic group are excluded from state power, especially if they experienced a loss of power in the recent past, (2) the group's capacity to mobilize is high, and (3) the group has experienced conflict in the past. In sum, the authors concluded that ethnicity *plus* marginalization, organization and a history of violence are ‘an important part of the dynamics leading to the outbreak of civil wars’.[20]

At the more qualitative end of the spectrum, certain types of ethnic geography at the state level have been associated with an increased likelihood of war. A widely cited case in point is Michael Brown's argument that ethnic geography is often an underlying factor – i.e. necessary but not sufficient – for the outbreak of internal war. In particular, he noted that ‘states with ethnic minorities are more prone to conflict than others, and certain kinds of ethnic demographics are more problematic than others’.[21] In sum, different types of ethnic geography are likely to produce different kinds of internal problems. A particular risk concerning territory is that, where minorities are not deeply intermingled but distributed along regional lines, countries are said to be ‘more likely to face secessionist demands’.[22] Other analysts have agreed, noting that a combination of ethnic and territorial claims seems ‘a particularly explosive mix for the occurrence of violent ethnic conflict’ (see chapter 5). This view suggests that, where ethnic identities ‘are in part based on claims to the same stretch of territory, violent escalation of their disputes over rights and self-determination is more likely’.[23]

When it comes to the proximate causes or triggers for particular wars, Brown rails against the idea of ‘“no-fault” history’ and instead heaps most

of the blame upon certain ‘influential individuals’ rather than broad ethnic categories.[24] This approach raises at least two issues. First, if certain forms of ethnic geography are necessary but insufficient factors in the outbreak of war, armed conflict cannot simply appear overnight but requires some sort of gestation period in which ethnic groups form, cohere and eventually develop the capabilities to wage war.[25] It also assumes that the political content of ethnicity – for example, what does it mean to be a supporter of Hutu power? – can change over time, allowing for more or less conflict-prone permutations. Second, Brown's focus on certain ‘influential individuals’ begs the question of how these people attract followers – that is, how do they mobilize state institutions or publics to support their agendas and what roles do appeals to ethnicity play in this process?

Although there is clearly no one-size-fits-all response to this question, it is quite plausible that sometimes elites are just doing what their followers want them to do, in which case popular mobilization should be relatively simple, and it would seem unfair to blame the elites alone for the policies pursued.[26] When there is a divergence between elite agendas and those of the masses, however, questions of mobilization are more complicated. In general it seems that, when elites engage in war-mongering, most ‘ordinary’ people try and remain neutral, which usually translates into passivity in the face of the existing authorities.[27]

But what explains why people actively support violent agendas rather than remaining passive? One of the more sophisticated attempts to analyse why people follow the extremists revolves around the power of emotions in human behaviour. Drawing on findings from neuroscience, Stuart Kaufman has argued that, when trying to understand why people act in certain ways, emotions such as fear, anger, hatred and love are more important than rational calculations. Since emotions set priorities – for example, fear might cause people to prioritize security over other values such as wealth, or love might cause them to risk their own lives to rescue a potential victim of genocide – we need to understand why people find certain symbols and ties particularly evocative. Politicians who can use symbols to evoke emotions are thus most likely to motivate their supporters to act.[28] However, since symbols are always open to varying degrees of interpretation, and because individuals and groups will react to those symbols in different ways, populations never behave in a homogeneous manner in situations of armed

conflict. As Fujii put it, even during wartime, when pressures to conform are at their most intense, ‘ethnic masses do not act as a single unit, but as a variety of groups and groupings that do not always follow ethnic lines’.[29]

Another popular way of thinking about the relationship between ethnicity and warfare at a general level derives from the work of economists Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler. They suggest that, although the primary explanation for Africa's civil wars lies in the continent's economic structures (see chapter 4), in certain circumstances ethnic factors can increase the likelihood of warfare. While fractionalized societies are significantly safer than homogeneous societies, countries where ‘ethnic dominance’ exists – that is, where the largest ethnic group is between 45 per cent and 90 per cent of the population – face approximately double the risk of conflict of other societies. The good news for Africa, according to Collier and Hoeffler, is that only 40 per cent of its states are characterized by ‘ethnic dominance’, whereas in other developing regions 57 per cent of countries are so characterized.[30] They thus concluded that Africa's ‘social characteristics … generated atypically low risk’ of civil war and saw ‘the rising trend of African conflict’ in the 1990s as due to ‘the contingent effect of economic circumstances’ rather than Africa's ‘deep problems in its social structure’.[31] Some of the reasons why this economic explanation should not be accepted at face value were discussed in chapter 4.

With these general approaches in mind, I suggest that it is useful to move beyond thinking of ethnicity as simply a backdrop or underlying factor in the outbreak of armed conflict. Ethnicity is not a static feature of the political landscape. Rather its political content, importance and consequences can be constructed and deployed strategically by actors in order to shape the contours of that landscape. In this sense the key question becomes: How can particular framings of ethnic identities open up pathways to violence? The answer is that two pathways stand out as particularly relevant here: inter-ethnic disputes and intra-ethnic disputes.[32]

The first pathway is inter-ethnic: where armed conflict takes the form of ethnic group X versus ethnic group Y. Using Kaufman's terminology, this is more likely to occur when a group's myth-symbol complex is defined by greater degrees of hostility towards an external ‘other’. Whether these conflicts are fought over territory or control of a particular government,

common variants of such inter-ethnic group violence include the security dilemma (where the logic of fear is paramount), status concerns (where the logic of injustice compels subordinate groups to rebel), hegemonic ambitions (where a logic of contempt towards the other drives the hegemonic group to maintain dominance through violent repression) and elite aspirations (where ethnicity is used by elites to manipulate followers to engage in violence against a perceived external enemy).[33] It is notable that comparative studies of genocide and mass killings tend to conclude that this type of violence is frequently a ‘pathologically defensive reaction’ usually carried out by governments.[34]

In this pathway, what Fujii has described as ‘state-sponsored ethnicity’ plays a crucial role. ‘State-sponsored ethnicity’ refers to the official construction of meanings about ethnicity evident in any given context. These constructions do not represent ‘the sum total of ethnic meaning in all social and political life’ but are better understood as ‘one set of meanings among many that exist at the same time’. Because they are backed by the institutions of state power, these official meanings can come to dominate interpretations of events, especially for outsiders with little knowledge of local history and politics. In times of conflict and crisis, the meanings encapsulated by state-sponsored ethnicity act as what Fujii calls a ‘script’ for violence: ‘a dramaturgical blueprint for an imagined world, one that is self-contained and populated by specific characters who say and do specific things at specific moments in time’. Based on her work on Rwanda's genocide, Fujii concludes that ‘The creators of this script are usually threatened elites in the capital who come to see genocide as their best strategy for staying in power.’[35] As discussed in more detail below, the idea of a script allows us to understand heterogeneity of behaviour within ethnic groups: while some people may be only too happy to follow the official script, others might act out their roles with a degree of artistic licence, while still others may depart from the script entirely.

The war in Darfur, Sudan, provides a good example of state-sponsored ethnicity in action. In early 2003, a rebellion organized mainly by the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit tribes in Darfur enjoyed considerable military success against the government's forces. In response, the government of Sudan pursued a counter-insurgency strategy based on funding and arming local militias within Darfur and telling them that they could keep whatever land

and loot they acquired in the process.[36] The government opted for this approach partly because its own armed forces could not be trusted to get the job done; partly because it had used this strategy numerous times before, particularly in the south of Sudan; and partly because the use of militias provided an element of plausible deniability for instances of excessive violence. Success, however, was far from certain, not least because in many respects some of the Arab tribes that ultimately formed the core of the dreaded *janjawiid* – crucially, the landless Northern Rizeigat – were as marginalized, if not more so, than the tribes which had started the rebellion.[37] Initially, the government organized, funded and armed a number of local outlaws commonly known as *Hajjana*. Although not all the *Hajjana* were Arabs, both of its two most notorious members were.[38] As the rebellion grew, however, the government needed greater numbers of recruits for its counter-insurgency operations. To this end, Khartoum's political elite played on fears among Darfur's other tribes by depicting the rebellion as anti-Arab. In particular, it claimed that the Zaghawa were especially keen on pushing the Arabs out of Darfur.[39]

Khartoum's plan was helped by three factors: first, the rebels had not consulted with Arab tribal leaders before launching their campaign; second, rebel forces began to attack Arab settlements and loot camels; and, third, international actors largely turned a blind eye to attacks against Arab civilians.[40] In this sense, the Sudanese state managed to depict a rebellion that was essentially driven by political grievances as one that was driven by ethnic (Arab versus African) issues. In so doing, its state-sponsored brand of ethnicity increased the political significance of the distinction between ‘Arab’ and ‘African’ within Darfur. This had important effects for insiders and outsiders alike.

The second pathway involves violence stemming primarily from intra-ethnic conflict, or what might be classified as a purging of ethnic group X. In this scenario, armed conflict stems from a desire to ‘purify’ the ethnic group in question in the face of moderate attempts to degrade it – i.e. to defend threatened boundaries or retain/grab power.[41] Here, the ‘ethnic card’ is typically played as a result of political infighting within the incumbent ethnic group between ethnic extremists and moderates.[42] In this pathway, the axes of extremism–moderation vary but might include political

differences, regional differences, economic differences, religious differences, etc.

In some armed conflicts, both pathways will be in evidence, often at the same time. In Burundi's civil war, for example, factionalism within Hutu and Tutsi political groups went hand in hand with the struggle between the two ethnicities. As Daley observed, this factionalism was ‘an expression of ethnic extremism and of individual rivalry among key members; the latter becoming more significant in the allocation of ministerial portfolios’.[43] Both pathways also require a reasonable degree of political organization and the formation of armed groups (ranging from large and sophisticated militaries to small bands of thugs) as well as some catalyzing forces such as a crisis and Brown's ‘influential individuals’. Once violence has erupted and been carried out in the name of ethnicity, so ethnic stereotypes are likely to proliferate and gain a greater degree of credence. While this will increase the numbers of people who think ethnically about their predicament, it would be wrong to assume that ethnic groups act in homogeneous ways or even that ethnic identities can explain the dynamics of the conflict in question.

The Case of Rwanda

What role did ethnic identities play in the 1994 Rwandan genocide? This is a crucial case not only because of the number of people killed in the name of ethnicity in such a short space of time, but also because it has typically been depicted in ways that give ethnicity the central role in explaining both the outbreak of genocide and its dynamics. Nevertheless, Rwanda is clearly also an unusual case inasmuch as its different ethnic groups shared a number of important commonalities, such as language and religion, and there was a significant degree of intermarriage across the groups. It is also a case which illustrates, unlike many of Africa's weak states, how a strong set of state institutions could be turned on its own citizens.

While it would be impossible to understand the violence in Rwanda without making reference to the categories of ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’, ethnic differences alone cannot adequately explain what happened or why the violence started in earnest in April 1994. In reality, the genocide was the result of a complex mix of ingredients. As Peter Uvin has persuasively argued, these can

broadly be divided into three core elements (the frustration caused by the longstanding condition of structural violence in Rwanda, the strategies of manipulation by elites under threat from economic and political processes, and the widespread existence of racist values in society) and four secondary factors (the prior history of violence in Rwanda and neighbouring Burundi, opportunism, the absence of external constraints, and the colonial legacy).[44] The crucial trigger was the (ultimately counterproductive) attempt to consolidate the waning power of a small group of powerful extremists within the Habyarimana regime known as the *akazu*.[45]

In short, the genocide was clearly the result of group dynamics, but it is not at all clear that the key identity ties within them were ethnic as opposed to regional or ideological. The main orchestrators were Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, his allies in the military, and a group of ideologues mainly from northwestern Rwanda. The genocide required sophisticated, detailed and sustained ideological and military preparations, including a version of ethnicity sponsored by both the Habyarimana regime and the coup plotters who overthrew it.[46] Thus, while Rwanda's civil war (1990–4) can be understood as an example of inter-ethnic armed conflict, the genocide arose primarily out of an intra-Hutu struggle. This section analyses how ethnicity was understood in Rwanda and then examines some of the blind spots of ethnic approaches in explaining the genocide.

Ethnicity in Rwanda

The closest term for ethnicity in the Kinyarwanda language is *ubwoko*, which means the type or kind of something. When referring to a person, however, the word used to refer to someone's clan, all of which were multiethnic and multiclass. In contrast, the terms ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ originated as references to an individual's status in society. Over time, however, they solidified into labels referring to groups. As Alison Des Forges noted, ‘The word “Tutsi,” which apparently first described the status of an individual – a person rich in cattle – became the term that referred to the elite group as a whole and the word “Hutu” – meaning originally a subordinate or follower of a more powerful person – came to refer to the mass of the ordinary people.’[47]

The distinctions between Hutu/Tutsi and the socio-political gaps between them became more pronounced during the period of European control in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Belgian colonial authorities decided to impose a Tutsi monopoly on public life by decreeing that only Tutsis could be officials. Hutus were removed from official positions and denied access to higher education. To facilitate such policies, the Belgian authorities tried to categorize every individual as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa ('pygmies'). One widely cited interpretation of how this categorization took place suggests that each Rwandan was subsequently asked to choose their group identity: roughly 15 per cent chose Tutsi while approximately 84 per cent chose Hutu.[48] An individual's designation was then registered in local government offices and written down on identity cards that all adult Rwandans were obliged to carry.

This process institutionalized the ethnic identities of individuals as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. It also afforded privileges to Tutsis, some of whom began to believe the hype about their own superiority over the Hutus. Traditionally, however, a person's *ubwoko* was not set in stone and could be altered, either through a change of status or through concerted strategic action.[49] For example, in terms of status, an individual's level of wealth (in terms of cow ownership) could result in a change of *ubwoko*: possessing lots of cows made someone Tutsi; losing cows would relegate a Tutsi to a Hutu. Obtaining a new identity card would represent an example of changing *ubwoko* through strategic action. In both cases, a degree of consent was required from people within the local community to legitimate the identity change.

After decades spent engineering a situation of Tutsi dominance, in the final years of their rule the Belgian colonists changed their tactics and began supporting the Hutus. This precipitated the violent events known as the 'Hutu revolution' of 1959–61. During this time the tables were turned and power relations between Hutus and Tutsis were dramatically reconfigured. The percentage of Tutsis in the Rwandan population declined sharply, partly because many had been massacred or fled and partly because some found ways to redefine themselves as Hutu.[50] As a consequence, while Tutsis represented 17.5 per cent of the population in 1952, by 1991 they counted for only 8.4 per cent.[51]

In more recent times, Rwandans learnt about this more restrictive interpretation of ethnicity in a variety of ways and in different forums. Children found out about their ethnic identities at a young age and from various sources, including daily life outside the home and in school curricula, as well as through peer and teacher pressure.[52] Ethnicity was also defined according to people's interactions with the state: importantly, all Rwandans over sixteen years of age were required to carry identity cards stating their *ubwoko*, which now classified them rigidly as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. There was also a quota system dating from independence in 1962, which capped enrolment in schools and issuance of government posts to 9 per cent for Tutsis to match the official percentage of Tutsis in the population.[53] Finally, two post-independence censuses (in 1978 and August 1991) also reinforced a fixed notion of ethnicity. Interestingly, however, people often misrepresented themselves to the census takers.[54] This is curious because for all the importance it attached to ethnicity, the state remained willing to rely on people's self-identification and hence left open space in which individuals could make strategic choices about their stated ethnicity.

Ethnicity and violence

As even this brief discussion suggests, Rwanda's ethnic identities were constructed categories with fuzzy if not entirely fluid boundaries. To what extent do these identities explain the violence? As Lee Ann Fujii has observed, ethnicity-based approaches have problems explaining some important issues, not least, the timing of the genocide; Hutu non-participation in the genocide; why local leaders had to force so many people to participate in the killings; why some Hutus helped Tutsis; and why some of the targeted were Hutus.[55]

The first point to note is that the genocide did not occur during some of the highpoints of ethnic tension, particularly the economic crisis of the late 1980s or the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasions of the early 1990s.[56] Nor was genocide an automatic response even after President Habyarimana's assassination on 6 April 1994. Indeed, in the week after the assassination, Colonel Bagosora and his supporters faced resistance from other Rwandans. At a local level, genocide was usually delayed until representatives of the interim government arrived to confirm what needed

to be done. People thus appear to have been waiting for confirmation of the order to commit genocide.[57] This suggests that we need to understand the non-ethnic factors that facilitated mass mobilization, because ethnic tensions alone were clearly not enough to spark genocide. In this case, mass mobilization seems to have occurred because of the combined effects of propaganda, fear and anger, as well as greed – i.e. promises of property and other material rewards.

For the elites orchestrating the genocide, the primary objective was to gain and consolidate their control of state institutions in the face of what they saw as Habyarimana's sell-out to the RPF under the peace accord signed in Arusha in 1993. The key factors in the mobilization of ordinary people lower down the political hierarchy, however, seem to have been fear combined with a degree of anger about the 'Tutsi' role in the country's economic crisis and later the assassination of President Habyarimana,[58] as well as the opportunity to engage in acts of violence and looting with impunity. Ordinary people appear to have been afraid of two things in particular: first, what an RPF/Tutsi military victory might mean for them and their families; and, second, what the genocidaires might do to them if they refused to participate. On the first point, the so-called Bahima conspiracy depicted the RPF as a royalist army of pastoralist raiders intent on restoring feudalism across the entire Great Lakes region. The RPF, in cahoots with local Tutsis, was said to be actively planning to slaughter Hutus unless drastic preventative measures were taken to stop them.[59] These fears were lent further fuel in late 1993, when officers in neighbouring Burundi's Tutsi-led army assassinated the first democratically elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye. This event generated a wave of killings and an exodus of approximately 300,000 Hutu refugees into Rwanda.[60] The arrival of a 600-strong RPF battalion in Kigali as part of the Arusha Accords also added to the volatile mix of fear and rumours.

Widespread fear thus provided a crucial backdrop for the genocide. In Fujii's words, the 'script for genocide' thus began 'with a scene of apocalyptic proportions – the threatened existence of the group deemed innocent and good. The level and immediacy of mortal danger steadily increases, culminating in heroic defense of the threatened group through annihilation of the group's greatest enemy.'[61] From anxieties about the economic future to worries about an RPF victory and the assassination of

the president, fear was consistently invoked to justify genocide as a necessary defence against the enemy onslaught. Far from being unique to Rwanda, this is the usual modus operandi of perpetrators of mass atrocities.[62]

Regarding people's fears of how genocidaires might react if they refused to participate in the killing, Human Rights Watch researchers noted how burgomasters used both carrots and sticks to mobilize the population. Specifically, they

> directed or permitted communal police, militia, or simply other citizens to burn down houses and to threaten the lives of those who refused to join in the violence. … They also offered powerful incentives to draw the hesitant into killing. They or others solicited by them provided cash payments, food, drink and, in some cases, marijuana to assailants. They encouraged the looting of Tutsi property, even to the point of having the pillage supervised by communal police.[63]

It is important to note, however, that such material incentives did not persuade all Hutus to participate in the killing. Nor was it the case that the poorer elements of society were more willing to join the killers. For example, people in the prefecture of Butare, one of the poorest in the country, ‘were the last to join the killing campaign’.[64]

The second and related problem for ethnic approaches is the high level of Hutu non-participation in the genocide. At the elite level, a crucial part of the explanation for this is that the mechanics of genocide were planned by a small group of northern extremists.[65] Approaches that rely upon ethnicity as a central explanatory variable cannot account for this crucial intra-ethnic fault line: the regional rivalries between competing centres of Hutu power – specifically, the northern *akazu* versus the centre-south. At the local level, the participation rate in the genocidal violence differed across the country: the genocide was, in Prunier's words, a ‘hill-by-hill and a home-by-home thing’.[66] Although the exact number of genocidaires will probably never be known, they can be roughly divided into one of the following groups:

- the presidential guard: numbering approximately 600, they played a crucial role in eliminating the political opposition in the early stages of the genocide;[67]

- the regular army: comprised of some 7,000 troops in 1989, by 1992 it contained approximately 30,000 soldiers;[68]
- the gendarmes/police force: created in 1961 with 3,000 men (mainly from northern Rwanda), by the time of the genocide it had increased to 6,000;[69]
- the *interahamwe* and *impuzamugambi* militias: most estimates suggest these numbered approximately 30,000.[70] The former were generally associated with the ruling MRND party while the latter were organized by the CDR and largely comprised of its youth wing;
- criminals released from prison;
- other 'joiners':[71] probably the largest group but also the hardest to generate accurate numbers for. They included a wide range of people, among them many subsistence farmers, who participated in the killings.

Based on these figures, a minimal estimate would be that well over 60,000 people participated directly in the killing of non-combatants during the genocide. If they each killed one person per week for 100 days, this would produce a death toll of just under 860,000. The figure of 60,000 would represent only some 3 per cent of the male Hutu population aged over thirteen, meaning that approximately 97 per cent of Hutu males did not kill their fellow citizens.[72] This estimate led John Mueller to his overall conclusion that, 'insofar as it is taken to imply a war of all against all and neighbor against neighbor … ethnic war essentially does not exist.'[73]

However, a more detailed estimate by Scott Straus concluded that there were between 175,000 and 210,000 perpetrators (defined as any person who participated in an attack against a civilian in order to kill or to inflict serious injury on that civilian). Using Straus's figures, and defining active adults as eighteen to fifty-four years old, this number of perpetrators equates to 7 to 8 per cent of the active adult Hutu population at the time of the genocide and 14 to 17 per cent of the active adult male population.[74] Although the percentages of adult males involved are significantly higher than Mueller's estimate, it still strongly suggests that most Hutu males did not become killers.

While estimating the numbers and types of people directly involved in the slaughter is important for several reasons, we must remember the broader social context in which the genocide took place. The key point here is that it was made possible not just by the killers but by the actions and/or inactions of thousands of people who helped facilitate, organize and administer – the genocide's bureaucrats – as well as the many other bystanders who did nothing to help the victims.

Proponents of the ‘ethnic hatreds’ thesis would also find it difficult to explain why local leaders had to force so many people to become killers when hatred of ‘Tutsis’ was supposed to be a powerful enough motivator. In spite of the intense levels of fear, ‘the vast majority of Hutus seem to have stood by’ and not actively participated in the killings.[75] Testimonies gathered from both joiners and survivors also suggest that relations with their neighbours were usually reasonable before the violence began. Moreover, the joiners did not generally say that they killed because of a collective hatred of Tutsi.[76]

This suggests two conclusions. First, a person's ethnic identity played only a partial (and arguably minor) role in whether they participated in the violence; the more important factors were whether they belonged to one of the aforementioned groups and a variety of personal circumstances and motivations. As Des Forges observed, genocidaires killed for a variety of reasons: some were ‘moved by virulent hatred, others by real fear, by ambition, by greed, by a desire to escape injury at the hands of those who demanded they participate, or by the wish to avoid fines for nonparticipation that they could not hope to pay’.[77]

Second, it suggests that mobilization required much more than just appeals to ethnic solidarity. Rather, people had to be mobilized by local leaders – usually the prefects and burgomasters. As Human Rights Watch noted:

> Prefects transmitted orders and supervised results, but it was burgomasters and their subordinates who really mobilized the people. Using their authority to summon citizens for communal projects, as they were used to doing for umuganda [organized, periodic communal work programmes], burgomasters delivered assailants to the massacre sites, where military personnel or former soldiers then usually took charge of the operation.[78]

Particularly in jurisdictions where none had previously existed, the burgomasters were aided by so-called security committees/councils composed of locally important people such as military, police, clergy or government officials.

In many cases, however, neither sticks nor carrots could incite people to participate in genocide. Sometimes, Hutus actively sought to rescue Tutsis and Hutus who had been targeted. Once again, ethnicity often had little to do with such outcomes. Instead, such behaviour was driven by emotional bonds of love and friendship. On occasion, Tutsis were able to bribe burgomasters and other local strongmen to let them live. Occupying the middle ground were the majority of Hutus who 'did not answer the call of the local cell leader but neither did they respond to the cries of Tutsi in distress. As one witness reported, "We closed the door and tried not to hear".'[79]

A fourth problem for ethnic approaches is that some of those slaughtered were Hutus.[80] Among the first people targeted for assassination by the genocide's ringleaders were Hutus, including the prime minister and other moderate politicians. This is a stark reminder of the intra-Hutu core of the conflict. Beyond the struggles within the political elite, it is also important to recall that some people 'who were legally Hutu were killed as Tutsi because they looked Tutsi'.[81] Even relatives of powerful local elites sometimes suffered in this way. For example, 'Hutu relatives of Col. Tharcisse Renzaho, the prefect of the city of Kigali, were killed at a barrier after having been mistaken for Tutsi.'[82] In the climate of fear and confusion, it was not surprising that local leaders and strongmen 'became final arbiters of ethnicity in their communities. Deciding who was or was not really Tutsi was the clearest expression of leaders' power. In this way, the performance of genocide was ultimately about power, not putative identity.'[83]

The Case of South Sudan

After winning its independence from Sudan in 2011 (see chapter 5), South Sudan remained wracked by significant levels of violence. Intermittent fighting continued between north and south Sudan, especially in Abyei; the

SPLA continued to face opposition from other armed groups in the country and sometimes perpetrated its own abuses on civilians; and some civilians in the south suffered attacks by the wandering Lord's Resistance Army (see chapter 7). While these types of conflict had little to do with ethnicity, arguably the most common form of violence in South Sudan was the type of pastoralist, inter-communal conflicts analysed in chapter 4. This form of raiding was commonly described as ‘inter-ethnic’ conflict between one or other of South Sudan's ethnic groups and their sub-groups.[84] South Sudan has a kaleidoscopic mix of over twenty ethnic groups, with the largest being the Dinka, accounting for about a third of the population, and the Nuer, accounting for around 15 per cent. However, the war that started in late 2013 was different. It did not occur because of a set of pastoral or environmental-related issues but was the deadly by-product of a power struggle waged by a small number of political and military elites for control of the movement that would govern South Sudan for the foreseeable future.

The war's immediate trigger was fighting that broke out on 15 December 2103 within President Salva Kiir's guard unit (known as ‘Tiger’ battalion). This stemmed from an attempt by Dinka soldiers within Tiger battalion to enforce a presidential order to disarm its Nuer members, which predictably triggered a violent response. Fighting initially occurred in the army command centre and the Bilpam army barracks, both in Juba, before spreading further afield. Troops loyal to President Kiir, a Dinka, then overran the compound of Riek Machar, the former vice-president and a principal Nuer critic of President Kiir. They also arrested eleven ringleaders of what Kiir described as an attempted coup and went on a rampage throughout the capital city, killing many Nuer SPLA soldiers and their families. Within two days the fighting had spread as far as Greater Upper Nile, and within two weeks estimates suggested over 1,000 fatalities, many of them civilians.

Although infighting within the presidential guard was the trigger, the underlying cause of the violence was arguments within the SPLM leadership over how the movement should operate and who should lead it going into the national elections planned for 2015. During the first half of 2013, SPLM elites openly debated these issues and several prominent members said they were unhappy with Kiir's leadership and would run for his position of chairman of the party. In July 2013, however, President Kiir

sacked his entire cabinet, including vice-president Riek Machar and secretary-general Pagan Amum, and replaced them with some more pliant personalities and people from outside the movement. The official reason given for the shuffle was to combat corruption. But it was more likely political manoeuvring before the planned 2015 elections, and an attempt by Kiir to respond to public criticisms of his government's performance as well as to develop better relations with Khartoum by installing people with close connections to the NCP.[85] Shortly thereafter, President Kiir announced he would stop aid to the SPLM-North, which was still fighting the Khartoum government in Sudan, and signed a new security agreement with Sudanese President Bashir.

Unsurprisingly, tensions mounted within the SPLM, and on 8 December Riek Machar released a press statement which accused President Kiir of, among other things, circumventing the SPLM's Political Bureau and National Liberation Council (NLC), immobilizing the party, acting unconstitutionally in dissolving the party organs and dismissing state governors, bringing non-SPLM members into government, making too many concessions to Khartoum in post-independence negotiations, forming a personal army in the guise of presidential guards, and mismanaging the country's finances.[86]

Rumours circulated that the dissenters would try and vote Kiir out of the party chairmanship. The President responded by cancelling the meeting of the Political Bureau, the party's highest organ. Instead, on 14 December, Kiir and Machar confronted one another on the first day of the NLC meeting. Machar's allies then boycotted the second day, the same day that fighting broke out within Tiger battalion.

What began as a political confrontation between the SPLM's heavyweights and their guards quickly morphed into a widespread and bloody spiral of military revenge and counter-revenge along Dinka–Nuer ethnic lines. As one local commentator put it, ‘if South Sudanese see the party fight taking any ethnic lines, people will stand behind their persons’.[87] On the streets, Human Rights Watch catalogued ‘appalling crimes’ committed against soldiers and civilians alike ‘for no other reason than their ethnicity’.[88] After Machar fled Juba, he gained support from a number of senior SPLA commanders, including Taban Deng Gai, a Nuer, former Governor of Unity

State, who had also been removed in July 2013, and General Peter Yak Gadet, also a Nuer SPLA commander who had been part of the breakaway SPLM/A faction in 1991. His supporters adopted the name SPLM-in-Opposition, reflecting the importance of the battle to retain the SPLM name and heritage. For its part, President Kiir's government received military assistance from the JEM rebels in Darfur, the SPLM-North in Sudan, and the Ugandan military, which deployed immediately, claiming it was invited in by the government to maintain order and protect Uganda citizens caught up in the fighting.[89]

As violence spread across South Sudan, hundreds of thousands of civilians were displaced. Tens of thousands of them sought shelter with the UN peacekeeping operation, UNMISS, which was granted 6,000 reinforcements by the UN Security Council but lacked the mandate and capabilities to stop the war. In January 2014, Ethiopian-led mediation under the auspices of IGAD produced the first of many ceasefires and agreements that quickly broke down. It became apparent that the leaders on both sides were unwilling to compromise and the war continued. In March 2015, South Sudanese lawmakers passed a Constitutional Amendment Bill that extended President Kiir's term for a further three years. As Kiir's presidential term officially expired on 9 July 2015, Riek Machar released a document declaring Kiir's government ‘unconstitutional and illegitimate as of midnight of July 8, 2015.’ It concluded: ‘Should President Kiir remain adamant and refuse to hand over power back to the people, then the citizens have every right to rise up and overthrow his regime.’[90]

What role did ethnic identities play in this war? References to ethnicity saturated much of the reportage of the conflict, where it was attributed various roles. Ethnic suspicion was said to have split the elite presidential guard. Ethnic targeting was reported, starting with the door-to-door searches for ‘ethnic Nuer’ in the capital city, Juba. It spread to other areas where minority ethnic Dinka were similarly attacked. Ethnic mobilization was in evidence as militia forces were formed to act as auxiliaries for the regular troops on both sides. But this implies that mobilization was necessary and these forces were not a spontaneous outburst of ethnic hatreds or fears. Memories of ethnic trauma were also resurrected, harking back to the violent SPLM split in the 1990s, which had involved many of the same personalities and was therefore thought to colour perceptions of

the current crisis. Here, historical memory was viewed through ethnic lenses and some Dinka soldiers certainly went on the rampage in 2013–14, claiming revenge for the earlier 1990s split when Machar had presided over Nuer soldiers massacring many Dinka. Ethnicity appeared again in the discussions about potential power-sharing deals to end the war; usually in negative terms because it might harden ethnic divisions and encourage ethnic quotas. In such a context, it was hardly surprising that ‘ethnicity’ also became an explanation for the violence. As one headline put it simply: ‘South Sudan ravaged by ethnic violence’.[91]

The problem with such labels is that they conceal as much as they illuminate about the causes and drivers of the violence. Jok Madut Jok provided a more compelling explanation for the war when he focused on the power struggles of the SPLM/A elite within the context of a decrepit young state.[92]

First, this was a dispute *within* a single political party, not a struggle between broader ethnic groups. As a consequence, defining the conflict parties was often a difficult and fluid process and probably owed as much to personal ambitions that are hard for outsiders and locals to discern. But this was certainly not a case of all Dinka and Nuer lining up on opposite sides. Both ethnicities were present on both sides of this struggle.

Second, the violence did not involve large numbers of Dinka and Nuer civilians, most of whom fled or hunkered down. Rather, it was carried out initially by the various militias and guard units that most South Sudanese politicians and political elites possess and then by a rapidly fragmented SPLA. In this case, Tiger battalion's most trusted (Dinka) soldiers were ordered to take out a perceived threat to the president and then others thought to be loyal to former vice-president Machar. This bloody episode reflected a broader problem facing many of Africa's weak states: politicized presidential guard units. Presidential guards, like Tiger Battalion, often represent ‘an army within an army’, used by anxious presidents to ‘serve as a counterweight to the rest of the military’.[93] They frequently play leading roles in Africa's coups and counter-coups and are generally given better equipment, training and benefits than the rest of the military. Such units usually operate outside of the normal chain of command, reporting directly to the president's office and can have a strong ethnic bias.

Such guard units and this type of elite conflict are also more likely to be found in weak states with generally poor security systems, widespread corruption, unsettled constitutional issues, lack of rule of law, exclusion of youth, etc. South Sudan in late 2013 exemplified such tendencies. It even managed to dislodge Somalia at the top of the global Fragile States Index 2014 and later 2015.[94] In such a context, state institutions were politicized but weak. Accusations of corruption, for instance, were used as a way to remove political opponents rather than change the corrupt system. There was also a climate of impunity, which meant that the SPLM elites knew full well there was unlikely to be any accountability for atrocities because there were no effective state institutions to punish such behaviour. Finally, the SPLA itself was not a coherent or professional institution. It was instead a collection of fragmented security forces cobbled together through various political bargains and deals with no shared ethos or loyalty to the state.[95] Moreover, it had increased massively in the decade before southern independence, growing from around 40,000 in 2004 to a payroll figure of 240,000 by 2011.[96] The SPLA had become, in Alex de Waal's words, ‘less a guardian of national security than a social welfare distribution combined with a threat to the security of the communities where its forces were stationed’.[97] Thus when its political leadership tore itself apart, the army splintered with them and not entirely along ethnic lines.

In sum, while it is impossible to tell the story of South Sudan's civil war without making reference to ethnicity, this was primarily a tale of a venal and narcissistic political elite that tore itself apart quarrelling over who would run arguably the world's most failed state. Although this is a sad start for the world's newest country, it is perhaps not unsurprising. After all, even the SPLM's longstanding leader, John Garang, was under no illusions about his movement: ‘We started as a mob. We have been in a series of reforms, reforming a mob.’[98] Maybe it's time for a revolution.

Conclusion

As it appeared during the 1990s, ethnicity in Rwanda was a thoroughly modern creation which was amenable to change under certain conditions. Arguably the central factor was the way in which an ethnicity script was used as camouflage for the power plays of a small elite who sought to

control the government. The ethnic categories forged by that elite were so powerful that they facilitated genocide on a huge scale and in open and communal forms. But this process also reveals that ethnicity ‘had to be packaged for genocide, for its “natural” state was too ambiguous and fluid’.[99] At the local level, however, while they undoubtedly provided a crucial backdrop for the genocide, ethnic categories were sometimes less important in determining particular outcomes than other factors related to the local configurations of political power and personal relationships between the genocidaires and their prey. These conclusions reflect the power of Fujii's argument that the official discourse about ethnicity should be understood as a script for violence. In her words,

> Viewing state-sponsored ethnicity as a script for violence, not a cause, alters our expectations for how ethnicity operates during genocide. … Some actors will follow the text closely, such as when killers go after Tutsi and only Tutsi. Some will stray from the text as when killers target Hutu as well as Tutsi for killing. Some may abandon the script altogether as when killers help Tutsi instead of hurt them. The advantage of conceptualizing state-sponsored ethnicity this way is that it leads us to disaggregate the violence and to investigate the complexities and ambiguities embedded within the genocide.[100]

In sum, it seems clear from the cases of Rwanda and South Sudan that wars are never fought solely over ethnic difference. So-called ethnic conflicts are really political wars triggered by ‘influential individuals’ who attempt to harness political and economic forces to their own agendas, thereby strengthening their supporters and weakening their opponents. Broad ethnic categories have their place in understanding how societies function, but they are too ambiguous to be reliable guides for understanding how armed conflicts are triggered or how they unfold. As the next chapter argues, much of the same could be said about the concept of religion and Africa's wars.

Notes

1 For a critical survey of some of this literature, see Gilley, ‘Against the concept’.

2 Wolf, *Ethnic Conflict*, p. 10.

3 Hyden, *African Politics*, p. 204.

4 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*.

5 Hale, ‘Explaining ethnicity’, p. 463.

6 Ibid., p. 473. See also Fearon and Laitin, ‘Violence’, p. 848.

7 Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*, p. 53.

8 Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, p. 22.

9 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

10 Esman, *An Introduction*, p. 47.

11 Daley, ‘Ethnicity’, pp. 666–9, 677.

12 Lemarchand, *Burundi*.

13 Esman, *An Introduction*, p. 29.

14 Pretoria Protocol on Outstanding Political, Defence and Security Power-Sharing Issues in Burundi, Pretoria, 2 November 2003, at http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Burundi_Protocol%20on%20Outstanding%20Issues_2003.pdf.

15 Berman, ‘Ethnicity’, especially pp. 317–22.

16 Ibid., p. 326.

17 See Fenton, *Ethnicity*, chap. 4.

18 See Lake and Rothchild, ‘Spreading fear’; Fearon and Laitin, ‘Violence’; Gagnon, *The Myth*.

19 Kaufman, ‘Symbolic politics’.

20 Cederman, Wimmer and Min, ‘Why do ethnic groups rebel?’, p. 88.

21 Brown, ‘The causes of internal conflict’, pp. 6–7.

22 Ibid., p. 7.

23 Wolf, *Ethnic Conflict*, p. 50.

24 Brown, ‘The causes of internal conflict’, p. 17. This view is shared by writers who point to particular ‘catalysts’ for armed conflict, who usually appear in the form of leaders such as ‘ethnic activists’ or ‘political entrepreneurs’. Wolf, *Ethnic Conflict*, p. 83.

25 Wolf, *Ethnic Conflict*, p. 88.

26 Fearon and Laitin, ‘Violence’, pp. 853–4.

27 See Mueller, ‘The banality’; Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 5.

28 Kaufman, ‘Symbolic politics’, p. 52.

29 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 5.

30 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the incidence’, pp. 17–18, 25.

31 Ibid., p. 25.

32 These pathways are similar to those identified by Fearon and Laitin, ‘Violence’, p. 865.

33 These variants are taken from Byman, *Keeping the Peace*, chap. 2.

34 Zartman, ‘Preventing identity conflicts’. As the UCDP data-set on one-sided violence confirms, non-state actors also engage in such activity.

35 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, pp. 11–12.

36 de Waal, ‘Counter-insurgency’.

37 Flint, *Beyond ‘Janjaweed’*, p. 13.

38 Ibid., p. 17.

39 Ibid., p. 23.

40 Ibid., pp. 24, 29.

41 Fearon and Laitin, ‘Violence’, p. 865.

42 Ibid., p. 864.

43 Daley, ‘Ethnicity’, p. 671.

44 Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, pp. 205–23.

45 The *akazu* (meaning ‘little house’) was a core group of individuals within the larger network that supported President Habyarimana. Madame Habyarimana, her relatives and others from the president's home region played a major role within it.

46 For details, see Des Forges, *Leave None*; Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*.

47 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 32.

48 Ibid., p. 35.

49 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, pp. 115–16.

50 According to Prunier, approximately 20,000 Tutsis were killed during and after the ‘Hutu revolution’ and some 300,000 were forced to flee the country. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 62.

51 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 37.

52 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 108.

53 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 75.

54 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 110.

55 Ibid., p. 6.

56 In the mid-1980s, the drop in coffee prices saw Rwanda's coffee sales decline from 14 billion Rwanda francs in 1986 to 5 billion the following year. At the government's request, in 1990 Rwanda underwent a World Bank structural adjustment programme, the national currency was devalued by over 50 per cent and many people experienced a dramatic decline in health services. Hintjens, ‘Explaining’, pp. 256–7.

57 Straus, *The Order of Genocide*. In Giti, the only government-controlled commune in which genocide did not occur, for instance, the RPF arrived before the interim government officials (p. 65).

58 Ibid., p. 154.

59 To emphasize the point, government and militia forces periodically staged fake attacks on Kigali in order to create a sense of panic. Hintjens, ‘Explaining’, pp. 264, 267.

60 Des Forges, ‘Burundi’.

61 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 12.

62 Zartman, ‘Preventing identity conflicts’. See also Kaufman, ‘Symbolic politics’, pp. 52–3.

63 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 184.

64 Ibid., p. 198.

65 Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*.

66 Prunier, *Africa's World War*, p. 1.

67 This is Linda Melvern's figure in *A People Betrayed*. Others give higher figures, e.g. 1,500 in Kuperman, *The Limits*, p. 41; 1,000 to 1,500 in Des Forges, *Leave None*, pp. 39, 152; and 700 to 1,500 in Mueller, ‘The banality’, p. 61.

68 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 48.

69 Melvern, *A People Betrayed*. The plan was to have 200 in each of Rwanda's 146 communes, but the plan was never completed.

70 Ibid.; Kuperman, *The Limits*, p. 41.

71 This term is from Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*.

72 Mueller, ‘The banality’, p. 61.

73 Ibid., p. 42.

74 Straus, ‘How many’.

75 Mueller, ‘The banality’, p. 43.

76 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, pp. 119–20.

77 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 589.

78 Ibid., p. 182.

79 Ibid., p. 198.

80 One estimate suggests that between 10,000 and 30,000 ‘opposition Hutu’ were killed during the massacres. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 265.

81 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 33.

82 Ibid., p. 32.

83 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 126.

84 For example, Copnall, *A Poisonous Thorn*, p. 169.

85 Awolich, *SPLM's Internal Politics*, pp. 2–5.

86 Johnson, ‘Briefing’, pp. 7–8.

87 Awolich, *SPLM's Internal Politics*, p. 8.

88 HRW, ‘South Sudan: Ethnic Targeting, Widespread Killings’, 16 January 2014, at https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/16/south-sudan-ethnic-targeting-widespread-killings.

89 On Uganda's intervention, see Apuuli, ‘Explaining the (il)legality’.

90 Document in author's possession.

91 Klaas van Dijken, ‘South Sudan ravaged by ethnic violence’, *AlJazeera*, 3 February 2014, at http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/02/south-sudan-ravaged-ethnic-violence-2014236519937368.html.

92 Jok, *South Sudan*.

93 Ouédraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism*, pp. 20–1.

94 See http://library.fundforpeace.org/fsi

95 See, for example, Rands, *In Need of Review*.

96 de Waal, ‘When kleptocracy becomes insolvent’, p. 355.

97 Ibid, pp. 357–8.

98 John Garang cited in ibid., p. 351.

99 Fujii, *Killing Neighbors*, p. 121.

100 Ibid., p. 13.

Chapter Seven
Religion

Particularly in the early post-Cold War period, religion was frequently discussed as a resurgent force in world politics, generating a wide range of opinions from politicians, pundits and professors. Few were given as much airtime as the American professor Samuel Huntington, who propounded an influential but badly mistaken thesis that human history was in essence a recurring clash of immutable civilizations defined largely in terms of religion – 'possibly the most profound difference that can exist between people'.[1] Huntington claimed civilizations – but especially Islam – were responsible for a variety of fault-line conflicts in Africa (in Sudan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Chad, Kenya and Tanzania) in which the 'most meaningful' identity for any human being is 'almost always … defined by religion'.[2] Although Huntington's thesis was little more than a patchwork of stereotypes with an admixture of highly selective historical examples, it attracted many supporters, who felt they were given an added boost after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States.[3]

In mid-2015, *The Economist* articulated a similar line of thinking when it claimed that violent Islamism had become 'the biggest threat to African peace and prosperity'. Rebellious ideology in Africa, it argued, was back in a big way, this time in religious form. Specifically, the 'cancer of jihadism' would spread across Africa by tapping 'into well-known local grievances'. Ideological 'extremists' would follow the same playbook: they would 'emerge from and woo Muslim populations on the national periphery who are fed up with decades of neglect, discrimination and mistreatment by their rulers'. Next, they would 'exploit existing religious tensions and latch on to disgruntled Muslim communities'.[4] The cycle would then repeat next door as it had done in at least eighteen African states.

Huntington's work and that article in *The Economist* are part of a long tradition which sees religious beliefs, practices and organizations as particularly prone to violence because religion is absolutist, divisive and irrational.[5] Religion is said to be absolutist, since it is relatively easy for

believers who think they know *the* truth through communication with their deity to claim superiority over, and hence sanction violence against, non-believers who remain in ignorance; it is divisive because it encourages binary thinking such as us versus them, good versus evil, and hence can justify a total struggle against its enemies; and it is insufficiently rational inasmuch as, since religious beliefs cannot be proved or disproved, there is no rational basis on which disputes can be resolved. In contrast, other scholars have emphasized that religion is more often a resource for conflict resolution and peacemaking than conflict and violence.[6] Still others believe the whole distinction between religious and secular forms of violence is mythical.[7]

I conceptualize religion as a particular form of belief system, the key component of which relates to the faith in connections between the material world and an invisible, spiritual world. Understood in this manner, it is also useful to make several important distinctions that can help us understand the political consequences of religion, including its relationship to armed conflict. First, it is important to distinguish between religious beliefs, practices, organizations and experiences. *Religious ideas* are what people believe; *religious practices* are what people actually do on the basis of such beliefs; *religious organization* involves the formation and functioning of religious communities; and *religious experiences* involve the subjective experience of inner change or transformation.[8]

Differences in religious beliefs alone do not offer a compelling explanation for why armed conflicts begin. Different religious beliefs do not cause groups to fight but they can be interpreted to justify all sorts of practices, from altruistic acts of compassion, apathetic indifference, to spiteful acts of hatred. As the Fourth Rightly Guided Caliph, Ali ibn Abu Talib, put it with reference to Islam, ‘The Qur'an is a script bound between two covers. It does not utter, but men speak of it.’[9] In postcolonial Africa, religious beliefs drawn from three main families – traditional, Islamic and Christian – have been an important part of life for many people. In many cases, African converts to Islam and Christianity continue to be involved with their traditional religions, which have significantly influenced social, economic and political life across large swathes of the continent.[10] But these religious beliefs have rarely been a significant ingredient in triggering the continent's

wars. Of course, there are usually exceptions to every rule, and it is some of the potential exceptions that constitute the primary focus of this chapter.

Religion's openness to interpretation gives it a protean quality that can be used to legitimate violence as well as promote peace. Especially in times of conflict, it can be a potent motivator for action and mobilization in part because it is thought to offer an explanation for traumatic events, but also because religious identification is often a powerful basis for establishing secure identities.[11] While religious beliefs alone do not account for war, the processes through which religious organizations are formed, become involved in politics, and relate to particular conflict parties should form a central part of conflict analysis. Once this is recognized, the relationship between religious organizations and governance structures can help explain heightened risks of armed conflicts in *some* African cases. Thus religion, like the ethnic identities discussed in the preceding chapter, can become an officially endorsed ‘script’ for violence. Once again, the notion of scripts is useful for understanding the heterogeneity of behaviour within religious groups.

A second important set of distinctions is between what Elizabeth Hurd has called ‘expert religion’, ‘official religion’ and ‘lived religion’.[12] Taking Islam as an example, ‘lived’ Islam would refer to the everyday practices of ordinary Muslims as they make sense of their lives by interacting with religious authorities, rituals, texts and institutions. It encompasses a hugely diverse field of human activity, relationships and beliefs that may or may not follow the official version of ‘Islamic practices’ as defined for the purposes of law and governance in particular countries. This ‘official’ Islam, in contrast, is religion as construed by those who hold positions of political and religious power, including the state elites and law-makers. ‘Expert’ Islam refers to Islam as construed by those who generate knowledge about the religion, including scholars, policy experts, religious authorities and government officials.

To address these issues the chapter begins with a discussion of the literature which has searched for generalizable hypotheses about the relationship between religion and warfare in Africa. The second section then analyses eight of the key cases in this debate, namely, conflicts depicted as struggles between Islam and various opponents in northern Nigeria, Algeria, Sudan, and Central African Republic; intra-Islamic disputes in contemporary

Somalia and Darfur; and conflicts which took place with reference to a mixture of Christian and traditional beliefs in northern Uganda and the role of the Catholic Church in Rwanda's genocide. Overall, with a few exceptions, religious beliefs and organizations were more influential in shaping the dynamics of combat than in triggering the outbreak of war. The exceptions occurred when particularly absolutist and divisive groups of political elites used religious organizations to promote their violent agendas.

Religion and Armed Conflict in Africa

In a widely discussed article in 1998, Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar argued that anyone attempting to understand African politics had to grapple with the influence exerted by religious ideas.[13] This section assesses the extent to which this applies in relation to Africa's recent armed conflicts.

First, it is important to clarify what I mean by religion. Definitions of religion are often notoriously vague, but they tend to share a number of family resemblances. In Emile Durkheim's words, ‘all religions are comparable, all species of the same genus, they all share certain essential elements’.[14] Arguably the main resemblances are belief in an invisible supernatural being (or beings) which have the ability to affect life in the material world; a method of communication between humans and that being (or beings); some form of transcendent reality (e.g. heaven, hell, etc.); a distinction between the profane and the sacred; a worldview which interprets life on earth and articulates the believer's role(s) within it; and a community of adherents with similar beliefs.[15] In light of these points, I follow Ellis and ter Haar in defining religion as ‘a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, that is home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the material world’.[16]

Understood in this manner, how has religion been implicated in Africa's wars? This question has certainly aroused polarized opinions. Some analysts conclude that religion's role ‘as a source of conflict … cannot be overemphasized’.[17] Others have argued that religion has been ‘strangely absent … in most African wars’.[18] Neither view is accurate. Although differences in religious beliefs have only rarely been a primary ingredient in the outbreak of war, many of Africa's conflicts have had important religious

dimensions. In Liberia's civil war, for example, beliefs about the power of the spirit world shaped the behaviour of a variety of the combatants. Although the main drivers of the conflict were the desire to ‘gain wealth and prestige or to take revenge’, power was necessary ‘in order to achieve these goals’. And it was here that religious beliefs led some fighters to believe that they could acquire ‘the strength of others through eating their vital organs or drinking their blood’.[19] Religious beliefs did not cause Liberia's war, but ‘The ways in which people at all levels thought about power was rooted in religious ideology.’[20] One particularly bizarre example of such beliefs occurred at one of the NPFL checkpoints set up outside Monrovia. At the God Bless You Gate, fighters had a monkey which they believed had the power to recognize people from the Krahn ethnic group. Because the Krahn were famed monkey-hunters, the fighters believed the monkey could identify its predators and hence they would kill anybody the monkey touched.[21]

An alternative example of religion at work was the Mai-Mai soldiers in eastern Zaire who believed their connection with the spirit world gave them supernatural powers – hence their willingness to lead Laurent Kabila's AFDL forces into battle against President Mobutu's soldiers.[22] Literally meaning ‘water-water’, the name Mai-Mai comes from the belief that bullets could be turned into water as a result of a *dawa* potion being poured over their body to prevent weapons killing and maiming. As a result, Mai-Mai warriors often fought naked or dressed in leaves. Although Mobutu's troops were badly trained, poorly equipped and suffered from low morale, their fear of the Mai-Mai does seem to have contributed to their rapid retreat.

These brief examples suggest that religion has sometimes influenced the dynamics of particular conflicts. But has religion been a principal ingredient in the outbreak of Africa's wars? Two attempts to develop general hypotheses about this question concluded that religion was relevant to the incidence of armed conflict. Using quantitative methods, Collier and Hoeffler determined that a state's religious composition was related to the risk of instability, but not in the way Huntington's clash of civilizations predicted. Rather, they found that significant religious factionalization (many roughly equal religious groups) within states actually reduced the risk of armed conflict.[23] This resonates with the fact that Africa is by and

large a deeply religious continent, yet most of its wars are not about religion. Instead, the biggest risk factor was said to be situations of religious preponderance where a dominant religious majority existed (defined as over two-thirds of the population identifying with the main religious group).[24]

The other study, by Basedau and De Juan, based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, agreed, but added the caveat that the 'most trouble-ridden constellation … is a polarized structure in which a religious majority faces a strong religious minority or in which two main groups, such as Christianity and Islam, are almost the same size.'[25] For these scholars, context was crucial, particularly the governance structures that existed in the area in question. Their study identified twenty-eight armed conflicts in twenty-four sub-Saharan African countries between 1990 and 2007 in which religious factors played a significant role.[26] They concluded that theological ideas were at least partial causes of armed conflict in eight cases, 'either because aggressive proselytization caused resistance or because theocratic elements of the state order … were disputed between conflict parties'. Their most clear-cut cases were in northern Nigeria, Sudan, Somalia and possibly northern Uganda.[27] In at least nine cases they decided that 'religious actors and institutions contributed to the escalation of conflict by (religious) legitimization or incitement of violence'.[28] Nonetheless, the authors acknowledged the preliminary state of their data and the fact that 'other classic risk factors seem to explain conflict prevalence after 1990 better than religious factors' and that, overall, 'religion is relatively rarely at the heart of conflict'.[29]

These final thoughts chime with Bjørn Møller's more historical study of religion and warfare in Africa. Møller argued that, with the partial exception of Sudan's so-called north–south conflict, there was no 'significant correlation between conflict propensity or terrorism and religion', either 'in the sense that religious diversity gives rise to any "clash of civilizations" ' or 'in the sense that the predominance of any one religion (e.g. Islam) makes a country more prone to conflict or terrorism'.[30] This view was shared by Ellis and ter Haar, who concluded that, with the partial exceptions of Sudan and Nigeria, 'there has been rather little violence on religious grounds in African conflicts'. 'Properly speaking', they argued, 'there are no religious wars in Africa south of the Sahara.'[31] This is also in line with

one of the most widely cited studies of intercommunal conflict worldwide, which found religion to be ‘at best a contributing factor in communal conflict and seldom the root cause’.[32]

However, some new scholarship has added greater nuance to how we understand the relationship between religion and warfare in Africa, especially work conducted by Matthias Basedau and his colleagues.[33] In two separate publications, Basedau and colleagues have argued that existing quantitative literature on religion and armed conflict has often wrongly concluded that religion is not a significant cause of armed conflict because it has relied on poor data and hence failed to test the whole menu of religious factors.[34]

To remedy this situation, they created a new Religion and Conflict in Developing Countries dataset.[35] This covers 130 developing countries (including fifty-three African states) between 1990 and 2010 and notes the relationship of several religious factors to three types of armed conflict: intra-state armed conflict, inter-religious armed conflict, and theological armed conflict.[36] Inter-religious armed conflicts involve belligerents who differ in terms of their religious affiliation (e.g. Muslim rebels fighting a predominantly Christian government), whereas theological armed conflicts involve belligerents who have an incompatibility over religious ideas (e.g. rebels trying to impose *shari'a* law in a hitherto secular state). The dataset includes thirty-one country onset years for inter-religious or theological armed conflicts in sixteen African states. Twelve African states experienced inter-religious armed conflicts (Angola, CAR, Chad, Congo, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho, Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal). Nine African states experienced theological armed conflicts (Algeria, Congo, DRC, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia and Uganda). Five African states experienced both inter-religious and theological armed conflicts (Congo, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Nigeria).

The authors conclude that certain religious factors significantly raise the risk of armed conflicts breaking out by providing both the opportunity and motive. First, in countries where religious and ethnic identities overlap, the odds of armed conflict are 1.9 times higher than for countries without an ethnic overlap. Second, explicit calls for violence by religious leaders and religious groups’ grievances raise the risk of inter-religious and theological

armed conflicts, but not other types of armed conflict. Specifically, calls to mobilize for violence by religious leaders almost double the odds of the onset of inter-religious conflicts and make theological conflict more than four times more likely.[37]

In an earlier publication, Basedau and colleagues used an earlier version of the previous dataset (encompassing sub-Saharan African countries between 1990 and 2008) to argue that ‘religion indeed plays a significant role in African armed conflicts’. Specifically, religious identities might influence religious actors to commit violence against non-believers or heretics, and religious factors might be a mobilization resource for political leaders looking to gain followers by politicizing particular religious groups.[38]

Based on their dataset, they concluded that in sub-Saharan Africa ‘the onset of armed conflict is significantly connected to religion only when the proper religious structures (e.g. high religious polarization or dominance, overlap of religious identities with ethnic boundaries) in a given country are combined with evidence of politicization.’[39] They also concluded that ‘predominantly Muslim societies are more likely to experience armed conflicts but not religious armed conflict’ and ‘the dominance of Islam in a country doubles the risk of armed conflict onset’.[40]

As discussed below, when we combine these general findings with the conclusions reached by authors of detailed historical studies of the particular armed conflicts in question, it is hard not to infer that, in the vast majority of cases, religion was not a major ingredient in causing Africa's wars. This is certainly borne out in the conflicts in Algeria and Nigeria. In these cases, what appear at first sight to be clashes caused by different religious beliefs are actually more closely connected to the struggle among competing groups of elites for political power and prestige. Nevertheless, several exceptions remain, most notably the series of conflicts involving the Islamist junta in Sudan, the strange case of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, and the most recent wave of fighting in southern and central Somalia and northem Nigeria involving various militant Islamist organizations.

Key Cases

In these attempts to develop general hypotheses about religion and warfare in Africa, several conflict zones keep reappearing and can thus plausibly be taken as the crucial cases for debating this issue. The following section analyses eight cases based on an admittedly loose tripartite distinction between those which have commonly been depicted as fitting the mould of Islam versus others (northern Nigeria, Algeria, Sudan/SPLM, and Central African Republic); those involving intra-Islamic struggles (Somalia and Sudan/Darfur); and those which took place with reference to a mixture of Christian and traditional beliefs (northern Uganda and the role of the Catholic Church in Rwanda's genocide).

Northern Nigeria

Northern Nigeria provides many examples of organized violence which are routinely characterized as the result of conflict between Muslims and Christians. The conflict intensified and violence began to erupt regularly after 1999 in the wake of the decision by twelve northern states to impose *shari'a* law for their criminal codes. In most cases this decision was instigated by local politicians to bolster their popularity with predominantly Muslim populations. Along with the subsequent movement of non-Muslims out of these states, violent clashes started to break out over the following few years in a variety of towns, such as Kaduna, Kano, Gombe, Bauchi and Jos.

These riots (and subsequent reprisals) caused a large number of fatalities. Although the estimates vary wildly, it is clear that they would easily surpass the intensity levels necessary to be classified as a ‘war’ according to either the UCDP or PITF criteria (see chapter 1). They do not appear on these data-sets, presumably on the grounds that the clashes did not occur between organized conflict parties. Probably the most reliable estimates of the violence in Plateau State were from Human Rights Watch and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: the former suggested that ‘more than 12,000’ people had been killed since 1999, while the latter put the figure at ‘over 13,500’.[41] A committee appointed by the Plateau State government estimated many more deaths: between September 2001 and May 2004, 53,787 people were said to have been killed in the

violence (18,931 men, 17,397 women, and 17,459 children).[42] In the town of Jos alone, thousands of deaths were recorded. This predominantly Christian town of somewhere between 500,000 and 800,000 inhabitants, just a few hours drive from Nigeria's capital city, became the epicentre of the riots. Among the more widely reported episodes of mass killings were those in September 2001 (about 3,000 dead), November 2008 (over 700 fatalities, immediately followed by the arbitrary killing of more than 130 young Muslims by government soldiers) and March 2010 (over 500 dead), which were widely seen as reprisals for the more than 300 people killed in January 2010.[43]

On the surface, deadly riots such as those in Jos look like spontaneous outbursts of inter-religious hatred between Muslims and Christians. Certainly, in the eye of the violent storm, individuals were targeted because of their religious affiliation. A closer look, however, reveals that the root causes of the violence are linked more closely to other ingredients, such as the historical legacies of mining-related and colonial-related migration in the region; control over government jobs and institutions, which have been crucial in the allocation of states resources, especially those from oil revenues; fierce competition for jobs and access to institutions of higher education; and the deliberate manipulation of ethnic and religious identities by local politicians and other community leaders.[44] The last point is particularly important because it is difficult socio-economic conditions rather than religious differences that better account for the underlying grievances felt by the participants in the violence.

In this political tinderbox, however, the mobilization and manipulation of religious and ethnic identities could spark violence relatively easily. ‘Even when religion is not the most basic cause of conflict’, David Smock noted that ‘it is frequently used to incite either or both sides to mob violence.’[45] Similarly, Human Rights Watch concluded that factors related to political governance played a more important role in the outbreak of violence than religious differences, especially discriminatory government policies which relegated many ‘non-indigenes’ to the status of second-class citizens. In their words,

> Non-indigenes are openly denied the right to compete for state and local government jobs or academic scholarships, while state-run universities subject non-indigenes to discriminatory admissions policies and higher fees. As poverty and unemployment have both become more widespread and severe in Nigeria, competition for scarce opportunities to secure government jobs, education, and political patronage has intensified dramatically. Religious, political, and ethnic disputes often serve as mere proxies for the severe economic pressures that lie beneath the surface.[46]

In Jos, specifically, much of the animosity seems to have originated between the Hausa-Fulani (who are mainly Muslim) and the other Jos Plateau communities – including the Berom, Anaguta and Afisare – who have increasingly become Christian. As more and more local people began voting along religious lines, the dominance of Christians – who make up over 90 per cent of the town's residents – made it very hard for Muslim candidates to win.[47] Indeed, it appears the appointment of a Muslim to a key position sparked the 2001 riots, but the conflict was able to escalate so quickly because the government ignored the warning signs and failed to engage in any serious attempts at reconciliation between the groups. It is thus reasonable to agree with Danfulani and Fwatshak that these violent riots ‘rage on because of bad socio-economic conditions’, but politicians ‘use the religious card, under the cover of ethnicity’.[48]

In sum, it would appear that religious beliefs are at most one factor in Nigeria's volatile neopatrimonial mix and usually not the principal ingredient in the violent episodes. While in the midst of the riots certain individuals were clearly targeted because of their perceived religious affiliation, the group dynamics resulted from the official scripts for religious violence sanctioned by the local political authorities.

Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (Boko Haram)

Particularly since mid-2009, the violence related to the rise of Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria has eclipsed that discussed in the previous section. Basedau and his colleagues label the war between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government a theological armed conflict. Between mid-2009 and late 2014, this conflict had probably killed over 11,000 people, most of

them civilians.[49] Boko Haram's story is essentially the transformation of a small religious sect with just a few dozen followers formed in the early 2000s into a large, factionalized and transnational insurgency.[50] With many of its foot soldiers drawn from the Kanuri people, there is some overlap between religious and ethnic identities. As a military force, Boko Haram has proved capable of fighting several national armies on multiple fronts simultaneously (Cameroon, Chad and Niger as well as Nigeria) and has organized itself as a series of clandestine networks geared towards waging irregular warfare. The response to this insurgency by the Nigerian government was brutal, with its security forces killing thousands of people (civilians and militants alike) as part of its attempt to defeat Boko Haram.[51] That attempt failed and since 2009 Boko Haram has become a larger and more radical opponent, seeking out opportunistic ties with *al-Qa'ida*, *al-Shabaab* and the so-called Islamic State among others. It has made considerable use of IEDs and suicide operations.

To what extent was religion a major ingredient in this war? First, Boko Haram's supporters clearly espoused religious grievances. They were articulated by Islamic ‘experts’ in direct opposition and contrast to the official version of Islam propagated by the governing authorities in the twelve Nigerian states that had adopted *shari'a* law in 1999. Today's Boko Haram emerged from a sect created around Mohammed Yusuf, a charismatic preacher inspired by Salafi/Wahhabi religious ideals and who initially followed the Izala movement in Nigeria. By 2003, however, Yusuf was prevented from preaching in Izala mosques. His ideology had radicalized, rejecting all secular aspects of Nigerian society. It cohered around the concept of *boko*, a Hausa word that unites notions of sham, fraud, deceit and lack of authenticity that had previously been used to refer to the foreign colonial forms of secular education brought to Nigeria in the early twentieth century.[52] In sum, Yusuf's principal enemies were Nigeria's ruling class, including Muslim leaders in the north, who he believed were marred by corruption and tainted by their desire to emulate aspects of Western society. His solution was to create a strict Islamic state in northern Nigeria that would remedy these problems.

By this stage a group of about 200 of Yusuf's students formed their own breakaway commune in the small town of Kanama in Yobe State near the border with Niger.[53] They referred to themselves as *Al Sunna Wal Jamma*

(Followers of the Prophet's Teachings). Their first acts of violence came in late 2003, following conflicts with Nigerian security forces. Over the next few years, Yusuf was arrested multiple times but was always released and returned to his new stronghold in Maiduguri. The sporadic violence escalated dramatically in July 2009 when a week-long battle between the government's security forces and the militants resulted in hundreds of fatalities and Yusuf's death while in police custody. Although the government declared victory, in June 2010 Yusuf's former second-in-command, Abubakar Shekau, released a video claiming he was Boko Haram's new leader, and later that year his organization waged a campaign of terrorist attacks against a broader list of targets than before.[54]

However, religious grievances were always fused with a regional context of under-development and political marginalization. Boko Haram was not the first radical Islamist movement in northern Nigeria to use such grievances to justify violence. Although there have been forms of Islamist radicalism in the region from the formation of the Sokoto Caliphate in the early 1800s, Boko Haram's closest precursor was the Maitatsine movement, which was active in the 1970s and 1980s around Kano and was catalysed by some of the same grievances. Similarly, the rise and increasing radicalization of Boko Haram was part of the broader crisis of governance afflicting Nigeria in general and the north-east in particular. Pervasive corruption, persistent failure to distribute the benefits of Nigeria's oil wealth, and the under-development and political marginalization of the northern parts of the country all influenced the political context from which Boko Haram emerged (see the previous section on northern Nigeria).[55] These factors also contributed to the war in the Niger Delta (see chapter 4). Boko Haram subsequently drew many of its foot soldiers from the masses of *almajiri* in the region – poor children sent from their homes to study Islam with a Koranic teacher but who often found themselves destitute and with no formal education. In 2006, it was estimated there were 1.2 million *almajiri* in Kano State alone, while 70 per cent of northerners lived below the poverty line.[56] A 2011 survey indicates that in Borno State, Boko Haram's heartland, 72 per cent of children had never been to school (compared to 4 per cent in the Federal Capital Territory).[57] It was therefore not surprising that in its early years, Boko Haram attracted many of its followers by

offering welfare handouts, food and shelter rather than simply by the power of its ideological message.[58]

So while Boko Haram's call to arms was framed in explicitly religious terms, the backdrop was a series of grievances against the Nigerian state related to political marginalization and economic under-development intensified by corruption. This explains why Yusuf's followers were particularly angry with some popular local imams, whom they viewed as being far too soft on the Nigerian state.[59] Indeed, it is important to recall that Yusuf's original doctrine was not targeted against other religions, whereas Islamic clerics were clearly targeted and some assassinated.[60] It was only after July 2009 that Boko Haram supporters began destroying churches (starting in Maiduguri) and then Christian schools, and forcing people to convert to Islam under threat of death. The terrorizing of Christians was justified as being required to restore an Islamic state in north-eastern Nigeria.[61] Moreover, between July 2009 and December 2012 approximately two-thirds of the civilians killed by Boko Haram were Muslims.[62]

A third issue is to understand religion's role in Boko Haram's transformation from a small personality cult to a large, factionalized insurgency. This was made possible more by the government's ineffective response than the appeal of Boko Haram's religious message. In fact, Boko Haram's religious message was not accepted even by all of its own members. Although it is difficult for outsiders to discern exactly what motives drove the organization to splinter between 2011 and 2014, it is clear that in at least one case religious differences were relevant.[63] In January 2012, for instance, a group called Ansaru broke away from Boko Haram announcing its existence by posting its charter on the internet. Based mainly in northwest and central Nigeria, it shared broadly the same ideology as Boko Haram but differed over tactics, including the scope of its envisaged caliphate and whether it was permissible to kill Muslims.[64] Ansaru became *al-Qa'ida*'s Nigerian franchise.[65]

The simplest explanation for Boko Haram's rise is that it gained followers and became more radicalized after the brutal but ineffectual attempts of Nigeria's security forces to eliminate it.[66] The persistent brutality displayed by Nigerian security forces towards ordinary civilians living in areas where

Boko Haram was active turned many ordinary Muslims against the government. This did not always translate into direct support for Boko Haram but did amount to an unwillingness to assist the government. Other relevant factors behind the conflict's escalation were the weakness of conflict mitigation institutions across north-eastern Nigeria and the inability of Nigerian politicians to buy off Boko Haram's militants as they had done with other rebel groups, such as some of the insurgents in the Niger Delta. The latter factor does appear to be linked to the importance of religious beliefs.

In sum, mobilization based on appeals to religious grievances articulated by Islamic ‘experts’ played a significant role in the onset of war between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government. At least initially, there was also considerable overlap between ethnic (Kanuri) and religious identities among Boko Haram's supporters. But these grievances were always wrapped up in broader concerns about economic under-development and political marginalization in northern Nigeria. Similarly, the government's heavy-handed and ineffectual response seems to be more important in facilitating the rise of Boko Haram than the popularity of its religious message. In that sense, religion represented a significant ingredient in Boko Haram's war recipe, but it was certainly not the only ingredient and in some senses not the most important.

Algeria

Algeria's civil war (1990–8) has often been depicted as a religious conflict. Basedau et al. describe it as a theological armed conflict starting in 1991. It was precipitated by a series of violent riots which erupted across the country's principal urban centres during October 1988. Many hundreds of people were killed during these riots and the subsequent army crackdown. Within the next decade, over 100,000 people are thought to have been killed, with more than 500 fatalities a week during the most intense violence between 1993 and 1995.[67] The rioters targeted symbols of *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) power in frustration at the lack of benefit they had seen from twenty-five years of increasingly corrupt and authoritarian rule. The riots also shattered the myth propagated by the FLN's elites that their continued rule was justified because of their anti-colonial credentials gained during the liberation struggle against France.

In a subsequent attempt to legitimate its rule, the FLN permitted multi-party elections to take place in June 1990. These saw overwhelming support for the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), and by 1991 the party was on the verge of victory when the Algerian military stepped in to prevent this outcome. Support for the FIS came from a wide variety of sources, including petty traders looking for a new government that would guarantee freedom of commerce; militant Muslims looking for a route to build an Islamic state; and unemployed and not very politicized youths who saw the FIS success in terms of revenge against the FLN for the way it had repressed the 1988 riots.[68] Importantly, voters who supported the FIS did not all condone a violent struggle against the regime. The subsequent state crackdown on the FIS, however, opened the door for various militant Islamist groups founded earlier to wage a violent *jihad* against the governing regime. Specifically, groups such as *Al Takfir wa-l Hirja* and the *Mouvement Islamique Armé* benefited from 'a fund of sympathy' from which they were able to raise funds and draw recruits.[69] But, at the same time, their call for *jihad* persuaded only a small segment of the 3 million FIS voters to take up the armed struggle.[70] While this disappointed the Islamist militants, it was the FIS elites who were arguably the biggest political losers. In 1991 they were 'at the gates of power', only to see their victory denied and then the mantle of resistance hijacked by the militant Islamists.[71]

In what sense did this constitute a religious civil war? The ruling regime was certainly under immediate threat from rebels who used the idea of *jihad* to mobilize support and justify sacrifice.[72] There were also clearly some deep religious cleavages present with Algerian society. But there were other important ingredients as well. Although not sufficient to explain the violence, the longstanding economic and social inequalities which had persisted during FLN rule were not completely unrelated to the conflict. More important, however, is Luis Martinez's argument that a widespread 'war-oriented *imaginaire*' (worldview) shared by government and rebel elites alike made violence an acceptable, even respectable, means of accumulating wealth, power and prestige.[73] The principal protagonists in the war had all seen how, historically, violence – more than any other medium – had succeeded in turning established social hierarchies upside down and increasing the symbolic and material resources of those who wielded it.

In this context, the *imaginaire* supported the emergence of a war economy – what Martinez called ‘the profession of arms’ – from which many people, even those at the lower end of the social hierarchy, made money.[74] This encouraged a change in the composition of the combatants. While initially the militants were led by a combination of ‘Afghan Arabs’ and FIS activists, by 1994 a younger, less educated generation took over and criminals became predominant. ‘Emirs’ – the leaders of the armed Islamic groups – gained social status and money, primarily from black-marketeering. This made it possible for the deprived segments of society to accumulate funds, but it also opened the door for the involvement of a variety of criminal elements.[75] Thus over time the conflict started to take on less of a religious appearance.

Martinez is careful not to suggest Algerians are inherently prone to resolve their differences through war. Nor does he suggest that this *imaginaire* was the only ingredient in the outbreak of civil war. But its deeply rooted place in Algerian history helps explain the repeated choices for war made by so many of the country's elites and aspiring elites.[76] For our purposes, the key point is that this had nothing to do with religion.

Sudan

Sudan's multiple conflicts since the 1980s are often framed as a clash of visions over the country's political future between a dominant northern Islamist identity, pushing to assimilate the rest of the country, and a dominant southern, often secularist identity, dedicated to resisting the Islamists (see also chapter 5).[77] Although it would be impossible to understand Sudan's conflicts without reference to religion, religious beliefs were only one ingredient among several in various war recipes, and they were less important than the political strategies pursued by the regime in power. ‘Militant Islam’, for instance, was central to only three of the ten root causes of Sudan's civil wars identified by one eminent scholar.[78]

Of most relevance here is the post-1970 version of this Islamist project associated with ‘mullah-in-chief’ Hassan al-Turabi.[79] This was a political ideology espoused by a riverain, northern Sudanese elite who sought to create a political order based on what they saw as God's revelation in order to justify their desire to maintain control over as much as the country as

possible, especially the Nile Valley. As discussed below, they exported their project to the wider region in an attempt to destabilize its various opponents.[80] The fact that this ideology was the creation of particular political elites emphasizes the ‘constant need to remember the distinction between being a Muslim and being an Islamist’.[81] Or the difference between ‘expert’ and ‘lived’ versions of religion. Sudan's wars were not caused because most northerners were Muslims or by the fact that its population was religiously diverse. But the conflicts did have a lot to do with the attempt by Arab elites to forge a national identity and state institutions on the basis of an ‘official’ worldview which had a particular set of religious principles at its core.

The country's most deadly conflict in the post-Cold War period was that between the governing regime and the SPLM/A. Two events were crucial in making religion a central issue in the conflict: the ‘September Laws’ (1983), which imposed *shari'a* across the country, and the Islamist coup in mid-1989, which brought a junta headed by Omar al-Bashir to power. According to the Sudanese scholar Francis Deng, these events made religion ‘the central factor in the conflict’.[82] They also had the effect of producing ‘more Christian converts … [in Sudan] than the entire colonial missionary enterprise did during the first half of the twentieth century’.[83]

In March 1991, al-Bashir's junta implemented a penal code based on their interpretation of *shari'a* which included *hudud* punishments. In January 1992 a *fatwa* was issued by *ulama* (scholars of Islamic doctrine and law) which defined the war against the SPLM as a *jihad*. This was followed by several local variants. The El Obeid *fatwa* of April 1992, for example, declared that ‘an insurgent who was previously a Muslim is now an apostate; and a non-Muslim is a non-believer standing as a bulwark against the spread of Islam, and Islam has granted the freedom of killing both of them according to the following words of Allah.’[84] This not only led to the excommunication of Muslim members of the SPLA but precipitated the destruction of mosques in rebel areas, because rebellion against the state was now equated with a rebellion against ‘official’ Islam.[85] As well as cosmetic changes such as giving Islamic titles to government soldiers, the call to *jihad* was important because funds for the war effort could now be extracted from Sudan's *da'wa* (Muslim evangelical) agencies.

This war certainly seems to fit most ideas of a religious war. Indeed, one recent attempt to theorize the relationship between religion and civil war identified Sudan as an exemplary case of ‘religious outbidding’ – the idea that ‘elites attempt to outbid each other to enhance their religious credentials and thereby gain the support they need to counter an immediate threat.’[86] For Monica Toft, Sudan's conflict was a case where ‘religion moved from a peripheral issue to become the central issue’.[87] There is considerable merit in this argument inasmuch as the SPLM/A was explicitly designed to resist the Islamist assimilation agenda, and both sides used religion instrumentally to mobilize people and resources. However, it is important to note that the SPLM/A was not resisting Islam *per se* but rather, at least after 1989, the particular ‘official’ Islamist vision for the future of Sudan espoused by the ‘experts’ in al-Bashir's junta. Moreover, the way Christianity had come to many of the SPLA's soldiers was more a product of circumstance than conviction.

Take, for instance, the case of the *Jiec Amar* (Red Army): after the mass exodus of children who fled the war-induced famine in Bahr el Ghazal in the late 1980s, many thousands ended up in camps in Ethiopia, which often led to recruitment into the SPLA. While in Ethiopia, some 12,000 boys, who became known as the *Jiec Amar*, were educated in schools run jointly by the churches and the SPLA. Here, they were fed a diet of the SPLA's ‘vision of the military liberation of their country, and a daily immersion … in the narratives and images of the Bible’.[88] Although Marxist rhetoric had been prominent within the SPLA during its early years, after the fall of its supporter, the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, it became more open to the Christian ideas which were ardently held by many of its new recruits. Indeed, the *Jiec Amar*, among other converts, were not only involved in a struggle against Khartoum's attempt to force Islamic rules upon them, they were also involved in a struggle much closer to home to supplant the traditional spirit powers in their own communities with their newfound brand of Christianity. As Andrew Wheeler has shown, the rise of Christian beliefs across much of southern Sudan was primarily an attempt to deal with the horrors and disruptions brought by the war. In Wheeler's words, ‘The impoverishment that has resulted, the desolation, the grievous loss and the isolation from all outside succour for many years, has resulted in a desperate need and hunger, both physical and spiritual. Body and soul in

anguish cry out to God for help.’[89] The result was that, while those with an allegiance to Christianity comprised about 20 per cent of southerners in 1980, by the turn of the century the figure was between 60 and 70 per cent. Christianity apparently offered a better spiritual framework than local traditions to understand the war and withstand the intrusions of the outside world.[90]

Two other elements of Sudan's Islamist project are notable. First, it ‘contributed to the global Islamic debate out of all proportion to its relative weight within the Muslim world’.[91] Second, and more importantly for our purposes, it quickly spread beyond Sudan's borders, helping to turn the Horn of Africa into what Alex de Waal described as ‘one of the main theatres of conflict between jihadists and their enemies’.[92] Sudan's ‘expert’ Islamists thus helped foment conflicts elsewhere. In part, this was because of the activities Khartoum permitted the so-called Afghan Arabs – radicals cut off from their own societies and schooled in Salafi *jihadist* ideology in the anti-Soviet *jihad* – to orchestrate from bases in Sudan. But it was also because the Islamist project generated resistance within the region. The response of al-Bashir's regime was to support a variety of insurgent groups in neighbouring states, notably the Eritrean Islamic Jihad Movement (EIJM), *al-Ittihaad al-Islaami* in Somalia/Ethiopia, various militant groups in Egypt and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in Uganda, as well as providing a safe haven for the *al-Qa'ida* leadership during the early 1990s.

Drawing support from members of several Eritrean Salafi organizations, the EIJM was launched at a conference in Khartoum in 1988.[93] It was supported by the Sudanese government, which facilitated its headquarters in Sudan, and *al-Qa'ida*, which is thought to have trained ‘several hundred’ of EIJM's members.[94] According to one of its leaders, the movement's self-declared aims were ‘to realise our position as servants of Allah, and to establish the Islamic State’.[95] Its principal enemies were what it saw as Eritrea's ‘Christian regime’ and ‘hypocrites’. The EIJM began operating in Eritrea from 1989, and by the mid-1990s its estimated 500 fighters were carrying out raids and ambushes within the country.[96] By early 1994, Khartoum's hand in these attacks led Eritrean President Isseyas Afewerki to support the SPLA and the Beja Congress in retaliation. Although it was only a low-level insurgency, the EIJM continued to operate into the twenty-first

century and in 2003 claimed responsibility for a hotel bombing and an ambush allegedly killing forty-six Eritrean soldiers.

Formed in 1991 as a by-product of Somalia's civil war, *al-Itihaad al-Islaami* was made up primarily of urban and semi-educated youths who looked to Islam for the answer to their predicament.[97] Along with various 'Afghans', the organization obtained support and training from Khartoum and 'quickly became an instrument of Sudanese foreign policy'.[98] As well as spreading out to the coastal cities in Somalia, *al-Itihaad* branched out into the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. It was also thought to be behind the 1996 assassination attempt against the Ethiopian minister of transport and communications in Addis Ababa. The organization was dealt a significant blow in August of that year when it was forcibly ejected from its bases in the Somali towns of Luuq and Buulo by an Ethiopian military intervention. After this, the group adopted a much lower profile.

Khartoum is also said to have provided support for organizations, such as *Tanzim al-Jihad* and *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya*, that were behind the so-called Islamist war in Egypt in the 1990s, which apparently produced at least 1,200 fatalities.[99] Sudanese officials and *al-Qa'ida* were said to have facilitated *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya's* attempted assassination of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak as he attended an OAU summit in Addis Ababa in June 1995.[100]

In the Ugandan case, Khartoum sponsored the formation of the ADF in 1996. An Islamist organization with roots in the Tablik youth movement, the ADF was responsible for various low-level guerrilla raids and bombings (reportedly killing over sixty people in Kampala and Jinja).[101] For two years it was seen to pose 'a serious threat in western Uganda', but by 1999 it was facing defeat.[102] It is notable, however, that the ADF's Islamic credentials have been questioned. One of its ex-fighters, for instance, argued that the Islamic factor was simply 'a way to get support and recruits' and a means by which the organization's leaders 'disguised their political motives'.[103]

This last point about political motives is important because, while Khartoum's support for these militant organizations might appear to stem from some sort of Islamic solidarity, it had at least as much to do with shifting political alliances across the region. For example, Khartoum's

support for non-Islamic insurgents such as the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda shows that it was willing to put aside religious conviction for political reasons. As one analysis put it, ‘On a regional scale … the LRA is fulfilling a political role on the chessboard.’[104] Moreover, al-Bashir's junta, which came to power in 1989, did not always have hostile relationships with its neighbours and entered into pragmatic alliances when required.

Finally on Sudan, it is important to recall that arguments over religious beliefs were also one of the ingredients in the war in Darfur. Contrary to those who claim the war had ‘virtually nothing to do with religion’,[105] the genesis of the JEM rebels cannot be understood without recognizing the intra-Islamic dispute over what should count as the authentic version of Islam and what its relationship should be to the apparatus of the Sudanese state.[106] For other rebel factions, religion did not seem as important as other factors, but in one sense their stated concerns about political and economic marginalization were a direct result of the Islamist project emanating from al-Bashir's junta.

Central African Republic

In late 2012, a coalition of at least five rebel groups calling themselves the Séléka emerged from north CAR, where Islam is the principal religion. The Séléka force was bolstered by mercenaries from neighbouring Chad and Sudan as well as various criminals. Their stated objective was that the incumbent regime of president François Bozizé should honour the terms of the earlier Biraro Peace Accord (April 2007) and subsequent Comprehensive Peace Agreement (June 2008), including by paying rebel soldiers the money promised to them as part of the disarmament and demobilization scheme and releasing political prisoners. By March 2013, however, Séléka had ousted Bozizé, who had himself taken power in a military coup ten years earlier and ran a corrupt and inept government that provided almost nothing in terms of basic services to its population.[107] En route to the capital city, Séléka fighters defeated a contingent of South African soldiers who had been deployed years earlier to assist Bozizé's regime.[108]

Séléka's leader, Michel Djotodia, declared himself president and his forces went on a rampage across Bangui, looting, raping and killing. Because the

majority of Séléka fighters were Muslims, over the next few months a majority-Christian coalition of Anti-Balaka (‘anti-machete’) militia formed in response to these abuses. Skirmishes between the two forces soon raged, particularly across the west of the country. Reported as having ties to the ousted Bozizé regime, Anti-Balaka forces soon began deliberately targeting Muslim civilians, apparently equating them with armed Séléka rebels. This, in turn, led to reprisals in which the Séléka targeted Christian civilians. Although several small peace operations were already present in CAR during this period, in December 2013, at the peak of the violence, France deployed Operation Sangaris and the African Union authorized a stabilization force, MISCA. As these forces helped to bring a degree of order, the new junta President Djotodia was forced to resign in January 2014. He was replaced by an interim government headed by Catherine Samba-Panza, who was previously the mayor of Bangui.

What role did religious factors play in this war?[109] First, the composition of the feuding factions was largely split along religious lines, with the key players in Bozizé's regime and the anti-Balaka being mainly Christian while the Séléka coalition were mainly Muslims. Second, there were clearly many episodes of civilians being targeted by various armed factions solely on the basis of their religious beliefs.[110] Such episodes happened on such a large scale that by late 2013 and early 2014, the ethnic and religious demography of CAR had changed radically, with many of the country's minority Muslim population fleeing the country. Several neighbourhoods in Bangui also effectively became concentration camps for frightened Muslim civilians. This raised the dilemma of whether external actors should facilitate the ‘religious cleansing’ of areas where CAR's Muslims were facing direct threats of violence.[111]

Nevertheless, although religious beliefs shaped the conflict's dynamics to some extent, they do not explain its onset, which is rooted in what one analyst called, ‘the failing political infrastructure of the state’.[112] The source of Séléka grievances was the considerable political and economic failings of the Bozizé regime, not its stance on religious issues. Consequently, the ties that bound the Séléka rebels together were much more to do with political grievances against the Bozizé regime as well as the opportunity for personal enrichment through looting and access to some of the lucrative trade in CAR's illicit minerals.[113] As the UN Secretary-General concluded,

‘While the conflict was not, at its origin, a religious or ethnic one, the increasing attacks and indiscriminate retaliations have created a climate of deep suspicion between Christians and Muslims in some areas of the country.’[114] A second point is that these suspicions also overlapped with another divide within CAR, namely a strong ‘anti-Chad’ or ‘anti-foreigner’ sentiment.[115] This stemmed from the long-running tradition of external interference playing a key role in CAR's politics. Chad had traditionally been one of the worst offenders. Finally, not only had the ‘official’ religious script in CAR never espoused such targeting on the basis of faith, this was a position supported by the vast majority of religious ‘experts’ and leaders. The result had been that religious factors had not been a particularly important ingredient in CAR's politics. Moreover, when targeted killings did occur, religious leaders across CAR's various communities were at the forefront of peacemaking efforts. They often came together to insist that the war was primarily ‘a legacy of neglect, economic marginalization and political exploitation’ that had created a high-risk context for rebels, soldiers and bandits alike to exploit this type of targeted killings.[116]

Overall, therefore, the UN panel of experts correctly summed up the situation, when it concluded that despite the existence of numerous ‘targeted inter-communal killings’ it was ‘misleading’ to frame ‘the crisis in CAR as a religious conflict’.[117]

Somalia

Another case where intra-Islamic disputes (or what Basedau et al. call theological armed conflict) came to play a significant role was Somalia. Although the principal ingredients in Somalia's war recipe had very little to do with religious differences, religion has assumed a more significant role in recent years. As in the case of Boko Haram, some Islamic ‘experts’ that formed the nucleus of *al-Shabaab*'s leadership sought to mobilize fighters by discrediting the ‘official’ Islamic doctrine espoused by the foreign-supported Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and, after 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia. *Al-Shabaab* also depicted Ethiopian and (principally Ugandan and Burundian) African Union soldiers protecting the TFG as Christian crusaders. There were also arguments within *al-Shabaab*'s leadership over strategy and tactics, at least some of which were rooted in religious disagreements, including when and whether it was permissible to

kill Muslim civilians. But as with most other conflicts, religious factors were not the only or even most important ingredient. Clan politics and the struggle for political power at the regional and state level were often more salient than religious considerations.

It was the Ethiopian intervention in Somalia in late 2006 that raised the religious stakes in the conflict. Ethiopian forces quickly toppled the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) regime that had assumed power in Mogadishu just a few months earlier. Superficially, the intervention might look like a Christian regime targeting a Muslim one. In reality, Ethiopia's primary concern was not the fact that the UIC was Muslim but that elements within them were calling for a violent *jihad* to build a Greater Somalia, which included making threats against Ethiopia's Ogaden region. It should also be recalled that the regime of transitional president Abdullahi Yusuf which Ethiopia helped install in Mogadishu was also Muslim.

After its expulsion from Mogadishu the UIC splintered into rival factions. The divisions hardened considerably when one of the former leaders of the UIC, Sheikh Sharif, became president of Somalia's TFG after the Ethiopian forces withdrew from Mogadishu in early 2009. At this point Sharif was derided by some Islamic militants as having sold out and as an Ethiopian and American stooge. Within a few months the political terrain in southern and central Somalia had fragmented in large part along religious lines. In this sense, the religious dimension became a more prominent feature of Somalia's conflict over time. This could be seen in the complex relationships between the four most important armed groups after the Ethiopian campaign: *al-Shabaab*, *Hizb al-Islam*, *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama* and the TFG.[118]

Al-Shabaab and *Hizb al-Islam* were heirs to the stream of Saudi-sponsored Wahhabism which washed across Somalia in the 1980s but which was then moulded into a form of Salafi jihadism by *al-Ittihaad al-Islaami* (discussed above). The conflicts between them arose from two sources. First was the extent to which they were engaged in a nationalist as opposed to a pan-Islamic project. For *al-Shabaab* the ultimate goal appears to be a pan-Islamic caliphate – hence its growing ties to *al-Qa'ida*. It also reflected the significant impact foreign *jihadis* were having as a driver of Somalia's conflict. In contrast, the principal focus of *Hizb al-Islam* was creating a greater Somalia in the Horn of Africa. The other key source of tension was

over the political utility of Somalia's clans. While *Hizb al-Islam* worked pragmatically with the clan structures, *al-Shabaab* saw Somalis' commitment to clans as proof that they were insufficiently committed to Islam.

From 2007 these groups took control of much of central and southern Somalia, but as well as fighting among themselves they stimulated resistance from locals who challenged their extreme interpretation of Islam and their draconian approach to local governance. By mid-2008 the most important of these groups was *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama*. Originally established in 1991, this group of Sufi scholars turned militia took up arms in response to *al-Shabaab's* attempts to ban Sufi religious practices, impose strict separation of the sexes, and mete out harsh punishments such as amputations and stonings. As one of the Sufi leaders of *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama* explained, 'Clan wars, political wars, we were always careful to stay out of those … But this time, it was religious.'[119] By the end of 2008 his group was receiving military support from Ethiopia and had formed an explicit alliance with the TFG forces against both *al-Shabaab* and *Hizb al-Islam*. Since then *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama* and the authorities in Mogadishu have existed in a rather turbulent relationship, with deals made and broken on a regular basis.

Today, it is *al-Shabaab*'s leadership that has tried more than any other group to depict Somalia's conflicts in religious terms. From the start, *al-Shabaab*'s ideologues criticized the TFG for being illegitimate, corrupt and ineffective. They were not wrong. It adopted similar tactics when describing Somalia's new Federal Government, established in September 2012. Following Kenya's military intervention into southern Somalia in October 2011, *al-Shabaab* directed a considerable portion of its efforts against the authorities in Nairobi and massively increased its operations in Kenya, including the notorious massacres at Westgate Mall in Nairobi (2013), the small town of Mpeketoni (2014), and on the campus of Garissa University College (2015). One of *al-Shabaab*'s preferred instruments of propaganda are the videos produced by its media wing, *al-Kataib*. The video released after *al-Shabaab* massacred of over fifty police officers and civilians in the Kenyan town of Mpeketoni provides a succinct version of its religious message: 'It's a war between two opposing ideologies. And throughout the centuries the

nature of this war has not changed in the slightest. It's a war of Islam against kaffir. Belief against disbelief. And truth against falsehood.'[120]

Despite this type of rhetoric, like Boko Haram, religious factors provide only part of the explanation for the rise and then transformation of *al-Shabaab* since 2005. In Stig Hansen's words, 'It is today [2013] a large and heterogeneous organization, in which recruits are motivated by a variety of factors such as financial gain, fear (forced recruitment), siding with the winner, anti-Ethiopian feelings, clan grievances, a quest for justice through Sharia legislation, or an idea of defensive or offensive jihad.'[121] Religious factors were arguably only a primary issue for some of *al-Shabaab*'s foreign fighters in the Somalia diaspora and across the Islamic world more broadly, many of whom saw Somalia as a crucial front in the wider struggle to create an Islamic caliphate or expel non-believers from Muslim lands.[122]

The rest of *al-Shabaab*'s recruitment had very little to do with religion. First, many of its foot soldiers were acquired due to clan politics, principally from the Rahanweyn clan, which supplied fighters loyal to Mukhtar Robow, one of *al-Shabaab*'s senior commanders. Second, in the early years, many fighters joined *al-Shabaab* in order to take revenge against the occupying Ethiopian forces. With the collapse of the UIC, *al-Shabaab* was seen as the only actor that might succeed in ousting the Ethiopians. Third, *al-Shabaab* hired recruits, both by encouraging TFG defectors, and by paying militias daily rates according to the type of violent acts they could conduct.[123] Fourth, there was a strong generational component, with *al-Shabaab* attracting many Somali youths who blamed the elder generation for the destruction of Somalia and viewed *al-Shabaab* as a statement of revolt against Somali society and the failures of the clan system. Finally, a good number of fighters joined out of fear or were forcibly press-ganged into the organization.

Since 2011, *al-Shabaab* has lost most of its territorial strongholds in south-central Somalia. In response, it gradually morphed into a more extremist network that lost much of its support among the Somali population and geared itself to conducting irregular warfare and terrorist attacks, not only in Somalia but also across the wider east African region.[124] Some of its fighters headed north into Puntland or looked south for opportunities in Kenya. This tactical shift has made it less important for the organization to

recruit large numbers of foot soldiers. In this sense, by mid-2015, *al-Shabaab* had become a more extreme but loose network of actors, at least some of whom appeared to believe their own hype: that they were truly God's warriors.

Lord's Resistance Army

The conflict waged by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) against the Ugandan government and many civilians in northern Uganda and the surrounding region has often been depicted as having a significant religious dimension. Although he was never in command of more than several thousand fighters, for more than two decades Kony's LRA left a trail of destruction and displacement, becoming particularly infamous for its gruesome atrocities and its abduction and abuse of thousands of children. Once again, however, it is important to note that religious beliefs were just one ingredient among several in this particular war recipe.

The LRA's emergence can only be understood in the context of Acholi society and its predecessor, the Holy Spirit Movement, led first by Alice Lakwena and then, briefly, by her father, Severino Likoya Kiberu.[125] With regard to Acholi society, three factors help account for the formation of these movements.[126] In material terms, the two key issues were the continued widening of economic inequalities between north and south Uganda and the militarization of politics in the region. Both were processes started by British colonists but reinforced and sometimes intensified by subsequent independent governments. The region also endured another round of fighting in the late 1980s, when the Ugandan People's Democratic Army (UPDA) rebelled against Yoweri Museveni's new regime in Kampala. The third factor concerned the religious dimension of Acholi life, specifically the importance given to protective spirits, or *jogi*, which were used to explain afflictions that befell the Acholi, from Arab and European influence to tuberculosis. The mixture of these traditional beliefs with Christian and, to a lesser extent, Muslim ideas produced a widespread religious syncretism across the region.

In this difficult time for the Acholi people, Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) emerged to offer ‘hope for worldly as well as spiritual redemption in a dark hour of despair’.[127] It was thus unsurprising that Alice

received considerable support from the Acholi, but simply being Acholi did not guarantee membership of the HSM. Membership required initiation, which was thought to endow recruits with powers such as the ability to turn stones into grenades or immunity from bullets.[128] In military terms the HSM's impact was limited. While Alice won a major battle near Kilak Corner in November 1986, her forces were decisively defeated near Jinja in November 1987, although she escaped to Kenya. For a while afterwards her father, Severino Likoya Kiberu, tried to revive the movement's fortunes but failed. It was into this political space that the mantle of resistance passed to Joseph Kony.

A cousin of Alice, a school drop-out, an altar boy in the Catholic Church (according to some accounts) and later a member of the UPDA's black battalion, Kony rose to power claiming he was possessed by multiple spirits. By 1987 he commanded the HSM II, the goals of which seemed to be little more than vague ideas of ‘overthrowing the government’ and doing the bidding of the Holy Spirit.[129] Kony initially sought Alice's blessing, but after she refused, he changed the name of his movement several times, finally settling on the LRA (in 1990), a deliberate reference to Museveni's National Resistance Army. As in the HSM, Kony's recruits also underwent initiation to separate them from ordinary Acholi and turn them into *malaika* (angels) – interestingly, Kony wore a muslin *kanzu* during the ceremony.[130]

Between 1987 and 1994, religious ideas infused Kony's depiction of himself as a mouthpiece of God's apocalyptic vision for the Acholi, and he spoke regularly of his Ten Commandments (although these were primarily Christian-inspired, he later came up with some Muslim-inspired commandments, such as people farming pigs should be killed and those who worked on Fridays should have an arm amputated).[131] The thrust of Kony's message was that the only way out of this predicament was the complete rejuvenation of the Acholi people.

In 1991, the government's counter-insurgency campaign, Operation North, almost defeated the LRA but didn't finish them off – at which point a lifeline emerged in the form of support from the Sudanese government.[132] Although the LRA had always employed brutal tactics, a turning point occurred after the failure of the 1994 peace talks. From this point on, Kony seemed to despise the Acholi people and their spiritual leaders, perhaps

because they had failed his test of rejuvenation. This mentality may also have encouraged him to abduct children, as a way not only to bolster his forces but also to acquire a clean slate on which to create a new collective identity for the next Acholi generation.[133]

From even this brief summary it is evident that religious beliefs do not offer a convincing explanation for the LRA. Kony's army did emerge from a society saturated in religious beliefs, but it was also an economically marginalized and militarized region and the Acholi could point to a range of legitimate grievances against the central government. All these factors helped swell the ranks of the resistance movements in their early years. The LRA also owed a great deal to the formation and defeat of Alice's HSM. But unlike Alice, who intended to revitalize the Acholi's fortunes, Kony never intended the LRA as a vehicle for substantive political reform.[134] Instead, he claimed to be on a spiritual mission to ‘rid the Acholi of witches’ as part of their collective salvation and rejuvenation.[135] His warped agenda entailed killing many Acholi in order to save them. Unsurprisingly, it quickly alienated his army from Acholi society. Having survived Operation North, the LRA endured because of the combined effect of Sudanese support, an ineffective Ugandan military, and a central government which frequently failed to pursue non-military solutions and even hindered peace initiatives.[136] None of these factors had any religious basis.

Rwanda

In comparison to accounts of the LRA, the role of religion has not featured prominently in discussions of Rwanda's civil war and genocide – and rightly so, since religious beliefs were certainly not one of the principal ingredients behind the violence (see chapter 6). But the genocide does provide an interesting case of systematic violence against civilians being justified in religious terms within a country made up almost entirely of Christians. The key organization in this case was the Catholic Church.[137]

During Rwanda's genocide, it was common for the death squads to attend mass before going out to kill civilians, many of whom were murdered while seeking sanctuary in churches. In addition, in the years preceding the genocide, Hutu extremist propaganda outlets such as *Kangura* magazine regularly used Christian images to justify oppression of the Tutsi.[138] This

has to be seen in the context of a Catholic Church which had a long history of gaining the confidence of successive ruling regimes in Rwanda.[139] After decades of supporting the establishment of a Tutsi ruling elite, from the late 1950s the Catholic Church began to offer more support to the downtrodden Hutu. Thus, after independence, a close alliance developed between the Catholic Church and state authorities, both of which became corrupt patrimonial organizations.[140] The Church was thus always a political institution, and in Rwanda it accommodated and sometimes endorsed the country's extremist ethnic politics as they intensified during the civil war.

In Timothy Longman's view, the end result was that the ‘churches helped make genocide possible by making ethnic violence understandable and acceptable to the population. … Far from being passive bystanders, Christian churches provided essential support for the slaughter.’[141] For decades the Church had promoted deference to government authority. It did not denounce the massacres of civilians which occurred from 1990 to 1993, and when the genocide began it not only refused to endorse the principle of sanctuary for people trapped in churches but actually suggested that killing Tutsi was compatible with Church teachings.[142] This ultimately resulted in a situation where ‘people in Rwanda could participate in the 1994 genocide believing that they were acting in a fashion consistent with Christian teachings’.[143]

While some members of churches took courageous stands, many others joined militias, and in Butare, Gikongoro and Kibuye prefectures, pastors and priests appear to have been implicated directly in the killings. So it was that, ‘For the Hutu population of Rwanda, being Christian meant supporting the government, and in 1994 supporting the government meant wiping out the Tutsi population.’[144] After the genocide the Church responded to accusations of its complicity by denying any institutional responsibility and blaming the church personnel involved for their individual moral failings. In a 1996 letter, the Vatican said, ‘The church itself cannot be held responsible for the misdeeds of its members who have acted against evangelical law.’[145] Longman's account suggests otherwise.

Conclusion

In a continent as religious as Africa, it is hardly surprising to find that religious beliefs and organizations were present in many of its recent armed conflicts. Rather than putting an end to religion, war often made religious beliefs more intense, raised the stakes for people's religious affiliations, and shaped them in new ways. Depending where one looked, religious beliefs and organizations were a source of solidarity, comfort, explanation, assistance and peacemaking, as well as a means of justifying extreme acts of oppression and violence. It is this protean quality of religion that probably accounts for the divergent views on the relationship between religion and warfare evident in much of the relevant scholarly literature.

While it is possible for religious beliefs to remain, first and foremost, a personal matter between individuals and their God(s), when religious organizations and communities form, religion always becomes a social and political matter. This is when ‘official’ and ‘expert’ discourses on religion may diverge considerably from the ‘lived’ experiences of most ordinary religious people. It is this process of group formation and subsequent political dynamics that is most relevant to the study of Africa's armed conflicts. Once again, thinking about officially sponsored religious scripts for violence helps explain variation in behaviour among individuals with similar religious beliefs.

The evidence presented from some of the key cases in the post-Cold War debate suggests that Ellis and ter Haar's claim that there have been no religious wars in sub-Saharan Africa goes too far. Of course, everything hinges on what counts as a religious conflict, but at least one new dataset has made a good case for thinking that some religious factors have been related to the causes of inter-religious or theological armed conflicts on the continent.[146] If we reject monocausal explanations for Africa's armed conflicts, then a better question to ask is whether religion was ever a significant ingredient in Africa's war recipes. The answer to this question is ‘sometimes’. There do appear to be some exceptions to the general rule that most African conflicts were not caused by religion. Kony's LRA, for instance, is literally inexplicable without reference to the spirit world. Although al-Bashir's junta broke virtually every precept of Islam, by carrying out their political project in the name of God they gave the war a

religious dimension and generated religious forms of resistance among southerners. The same could be said about both Boko Haram and *al-Shabaab*, although once again religious factors were not the only, or even most important, factor in the rise of these organizations. Similarly, the various waves of violence in Darfur, Sudan make little sense without recognizing how different interpretations of Islam served as a mobilizing force for various conflict parties. In other key cases, such as Algeria and communal conflict in northern Nigeria, however, religion's role was less important than deeply ingrained political cultures and elite opportunism amidst a social context of severe poverty and inequality.

Notes

1 See Huntington, ‘The clash’ and *The Clash*.

2 Huntington, *The Clash*, pp. 254–7, 267.

3 For the argument that Islam has played a larger role in contemporary religious civil wars than either Christianity or Judaism, see Toft, ‘Getting religion?’.

4 ‘Jihafrica: Africa's jihadists’, *The Economist*, 18 July 2015. It named Algeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia and Uganda.

5 Cavanagh, *The Myth*.

6 ter Haar, ‘Religion’.

7 Cavanagh, *The Myth*.

8 Ellis and ter Haar, ‘Religion and politics’, p. 396.

9 Cited in de Waal and Abdel Salam, ‘Africa’, p. 255.

10 For an overview, see Olupona, *African Religions*.

11 Seul, ‘Ours is the way’.

12 Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom*.

13 Ellis and ter Haar, ‘Religion and politics’ (1998). See also their *Worlds of Power* and ‘Religion and politics’ (2007).

14 Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms*, p. 6.

15 See Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*; Toft, ‘Getting religion?’, p. 99.

16 Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, p. 14. This is based on the work of the nineteenth-century anthropologist E.B. Tylor, who defined religion as ‘the belief in Spiritual Beings’.

17 Zeleza, ‘Introduction’, p. 25.

18 Jackson, ‘Are Africa's wars’, p. 279.

19 Ellis, *The Mask*, pp. 264–5.

20 Ibid, p. 304.

21 Ibid, p. 116.

22 Wild, ‘Is it witchcraft?’.

23 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the incidence’, p. 22.

24 The PITF reached a similar conclusion. See Goldstone et al., ‘A global forecasting model’ (2005), p. 25.

25 Basedau and De Juan, *The ‘Ambivalence of the Sacred’*, p. 8. Of course, focusing on populations of equivalent size begs the question of what level of analysis one is talking about. In Nigeria, for instance, at the national level Muslims and Christians might be roughly equal in numbers, but in particular towns where violence has erupted, such as Jos, the groups may be heavily skewed, with a dominant majority and small minority.

26 Ibid., p. 8.

27 An alternative data-set of civil wars from 1940 to 2000 compiled by Monica Duffy Toft concluded that forty-two out of 133 cases (32 per

cent) could be classified as religious civil wars (of these, religion was a ‘central issue’ in twenty-five and a ‘peripheral issue’ in the remaining seventeen). Only seven of these religious civil wars were in Africa and only two occurred in the period after 1990: Algeria (1992) and Sudan (1983). Toft, ‘Getting religion?’.

28 Basedau and De Juan, *The ‘Ambivalence of the Sacred’*, p. 16.

29 Ibid., pp. 20, 23.

30 Møller, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 5.

31 Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, pp. 106–7.

32 Gurr, *Minorities at Risk*, p. 317.

33 It appears that Basedau has departed from his earlier conclusions about the risks of war in religiously polarized societies as expressed in Basedau and De Juan, *The ‘Ambivalence of the Sacred’*. As discussed below, his latest collaborative research concludes such polarized societies reduce the risk of armed conflict breaking out.

34 See Basedau et al., *Do Religious Factors* and Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vüllers, ‘Bad Religion?’.

35 Available at http://jcr.sagepub.com/content/suppl/2014/07/24/0022002714541853.DC1.

36 This dataset does not include any of the non-state armed conflicts reported by the UCDP.

37 Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vüllers, ‘Bad Religion?’

38 Basedau et al., *Do Religious Factors*, pp. 7–8. Fourteen countries in sub-Saharan Africa were identified as experiencing interreligious or theological armed conflicts: Angola, CAR, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia and Uganda.

39 Basedau et al., *Do Religious Factors*, p. 16.

40 Ibid, p. 13.

41 HRW, *Arbitrary Killings*, p. 3; Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 76th Session, Decision 1(76) Situation in Nigeria, 11 March 2010 (UN doc. CERD/C/NGA/DEC/1, 14 June 2010).

42 'Nigeria: Plateau State violence claimed 53,000 lives – report', *IRIN News*, 8 October 2004, www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=51641.

43 See, respectively, Danfulani and Fwatshak, 'Briefing', p. 243; HRW, *Arbitrary Killings*; 'Nigeria ethnic violence "leaves hundreds dead" ', *BBC News Online*, 8 March 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8555018.stm; and 'Nigeria religious riot bodies found in village wells', *BBC News Online*, 23 January 2010, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8476534.stm.

44 See Danfulani and Fwatshak, 'Briefing'; Last, 'Muslims and Christians'.

45 Smock, 'Mediating', p. 17.

46 HRW, *Arbitrary Killings*, p. 3.

47 Danfulani and Fwatshak, 'Briefing', pp. 247–8.

48 Ibid., p. 255.

49 Nathaniel Allen, Peter Lewis and Hilary Matfess, 'The Boko Haram insurgency, by the numbers', *Monkey Cage*, 6 October 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/10/06/the-boko-haram-insurgency-by-the-numbers/.

50 For overviews of the movement, see ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)*, Smith, *Boko Haram*, Comolli, *Boko Haram*.

51 See, for example, Amnesty International, *Stars on their Shoulders*.

52 Newman, 'The Etymology'.

53 They dubbed their base 'Afghanistan' and flew the Taliban flag, although there were apparently no formal links. Local critics of the group gave them the nickname the Nigerian Taliban.

54 It should be noted that much of what passes for ‘fact’ about Boko Haram is more accurately recorded as speculation. Analysts have found it difficult to understand an organization that since July 2009 has been highly secretive, had no consistent leadership or an entirely coherent agenda, and whose soldiers were notoriously difficult to distinguish from bandits.

55 For a good short overview, see ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)*, pp. 2–6.

56 Sodipo, *Mitigating Radicalism*, p. 4.

57 Comolli, *Boko Haram*, p. 4.

58 Walker, *What is Boko Haram?*, p. 3.

59 Comolli, *Boko Haram*, p. 29.

60 Chouin, Reinert, and Apard, ‘Body count’, p. 217. Assassinations were often conducted by two men on a motorbike shooting their target at close range in the street.

61 Chouin, Reinert, and Apard, ‘Body count’, pp. 217–18.

62 Ibid., pp. 220ff.

63 See ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)*, pp. 21–22.

64 Mohammed, ‘The message and methods’, pp. 29–30. First, Ansaru said it would not harm innocent Muslims except in self-defence. Second, it condemns the killing of ‘innocent security operatives’. Third, Ansaru's self-image is the defender of Islamic interests all over Africa, in contrast to Boko Haram's local focus on northern Nigeria. Ansaru is believed to have strong connections with AQIM and to have engaged in the kidnapping of Westerners during 2011.

65 ICG, *Curbing Violence in Nigeria (II)*, p. 27.

66 By Nigerian security forces I mean not only the army, police and intelligence services, but also the Civilian Joint Task Force, a militia which worked closely with the official security forces. The Civilian Joint

Task Force emerged in Borno state during 2013 following President Jonathan's extension of the state of emergency there. Its stated objective was to combat Boko Haram in the absence of an effective government response.

67 Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War*, p. 246.

68 Ibid., p. 21.

69 Ibid., pp. 21–2.

70 Ibid., p. 92.

71 Ibid., pp. 93, 251.

72 Abdel Salama and de Waal, ‘On the failure’, p. 32.

73 Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War*, pp. 7, 10–11. Militarism is also central in the analysis of the war provided by Turshen, ‘Militarism’.

74 Martinez, *The Algerian Civil War*, p. 247.

75 Ibid., pp. 75–6, 100, 248.

76 Ibid., pp. 15, 17.

77 Deng, *War of Visions*. Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vüllers’ ‘Bad Religion?’ database does not classify any of Sudan's wars as inter-religious or theological.

78 Johnson, *The Root Causes*, pp. xviii–xix.

79 For an overview of the project and al Turabi's influential position in it, see de Waal and Abdel Salam, ‘Islamism’, pp. 71–113.

80 See de Waal, ‘The politics’.

81 O'Fahey, ‘Islam’, p. 258.

82 Deng, *War of Visions*, pp. 13, 16.

83 Johnson, *The Root Causes*, p. xviii.

84 de Waal and Abdel Salam, ‘Islamism,’ p. 73.

85 Ibid., p. 73.

86 Toft, ‘Getting religion?’, p. 103.

87 Ibid., p. 128.

88 Wheeler, ‘Finding meaning’, p. 58.

89 Ibid., pp. 74–5.

90 Ibid., p. 76.

91 O'Fahey, ‘Islam’, p. 262.

92 de Waal, ‘Introduction’, p. 1.

93 Connell, ‘Eritrea’, p. 78.

94 Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, p. 152.

95 The interview transcript is at www.fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/eritrea.htm (accessed 7 March 2010).

96 Connell, ‘Eritrea’, p. 78.

97 Marchal, ‘Islamic political dynamics’, pp. 125–8.

98 Gérard Prunier, ‘Sudan's regional war’, *Le Monde Diplomatique* (English edn), February 1997, at http://mondediplo.com/1997/02/02sudan.

99 de Waal, ‘The politics’, pp. 43, 215.

100 Ibid., p. 206.

101 Ibid., pp. 198–200.

102 Ibid., p. 209.

103 Cited in Møller, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 89.

104 Doom and Vlassenroot, ‘Kony's message’, p. 29.

105 Møller, *Religion and Conflict*, p. 7 and also p. 66.

106 See, for example, ICG, *Darfur Rising*, pp. 8–9; Prunier, *Darfur*, p. 93.

107 For background and details, see Carayannis and Lombard (eds), *Making Sense of the Central African Republic*.

108 Heitman, *The Battle in Bangui*.

109 Basedau et al.'s database ends in 2010 but it lists two previous inter-religious armed conflicts in CAR starting in 2006 and 2009.

110 See, for example, Amnesty International, *Central African Republic*, p. 7.

111 See, for example, 'Analysis: evacuation dilemma in the Central African Republic', *IRIN News*, 28 February 2014.

112 ACLED, *Country Report: CAR*, p. 1.

113 Agger, *Drivers of Violence*, p. 6.

114 UN doc. S /2013/677, 15 November 2013, p. 12.

115 ACLED, *Country Report: CAR*, p. 9.

116 Amnesty International, *Central African Republic*, p. 16.

117 *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013)* (UN doc. S/2014/452, 1 July 2014), p. 32.

118 My account of these groups draws from ICG, *Somalia's Divided Islamists*.

119 Cited in Jeffrey Gettleman, 'For Somalia, chaos breeds religious war,' *New York Times*, 23 May 2009.

120 'Mpeketoni: reclaiming back Muslim lands under Kenyan occupation' from the series 'No protection except by *Eeman* [belief] or *Aman* [covenant of security]'. Available at https://archive.org/details/Mpeketoni___E___HQ.mp4.

121 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p.3.

122 At its height, in 2011, there were probably no more than 500 ethnic Somali, and 1,500 non-Somali foreign fighters.

123 *Al-Shabaab* reportedly offered TFG troops $50 a month to defect at a time when many troops lacked regular salaries or food, and more generally $20 for anyone who could carry out a hand grenade attack, $30 for killing a soldier, and $100 for a road bomb or mortar attack. Bruton and Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia*, p. 28.

124 Bryden, *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab* and Bryden, *The Decline*.

125 The most detailed account is Behrend, *Alice Lakwena*.

126 Doom and Vlassenroot, 'Kony's message', pp. 7–8, 17.

127 Ibid., p. 16.

128 Ibid., p. 18.

129 See Dunn, 'Uganda', p. 137.

130 Doom and Vlassenroot, 'Kony's message', p. 23.

131 Ibid., p. 25.

132 Ibid., pp. 28–30.

133 Ibid., p. 25.

134 Dunn, 'Uganda', p. 140.

135 Rosa Ehrenreich, cited ibid., p. 141.

136 Ibid., p. 145.

137 Religion also appeared in another sense inasmuch as some ordinary Rwandans believed their society was threatened 'not only by political and military upheaval, but by malevolent spiritual forces also [specifically that emanating from the mystical force of *imaana*].' Ellis and ter Haar, 'Religion and politics' (2007), pp. 398–9.

138 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 61.

139 See Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, pp. 81, 125; Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 39.

140 Longman, ‘Church politics’; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 351.

141 Longman, ‘Church politics’, pp. 166–7.

142 See Des Forges, *Leave None*, pp. 189–90.

143 Longman, ‘Churches and social upheaval’, p. 85.

144 Ibid., p. 86.

145 Longman, ‘Church politics’, p. 184.

146 Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vüllers, ‘Bad Religion?’

Part III
Responses

Chapter Eight
Organization-Building

The armed conflicts discussed in parts I and II of this book left significant swathes of Africa in such a state of crisis that on the cusp of the twenty-first century *The Economist* magazine seriously asked whether Africa was a hopeless continent.[1] Part III examines four types of international effort to immunize the continent from the devastating effects of these, and future, wars: organization-building, peacemaking, peacekeeping and aid. While, in practice, these responses were deeply intertwined, they are analysed in relative isolation only for heuristic purposes.

This chapter analyses the attempt to build peace in Africa by strengthening the continent's conflict management organizations. It was based on the idea that keeping the peace required permanent institutions, not just ad hoc responses to crises. Interestingly, the African Union also drew a strong connection between democratic forms of domestic governance and peace and stability.[2] The process of building such an organizational architecture across the continent entailed four elements: defining priorities, allocating resources (human and financial), and constructing both bureaucratic structures and mechanisms and a capacity to create and disseminate knowledge (and hopefully to act upon it). In the early 1990s, one of the central challenges was that Africa's regional organizations were generally not geared up to manage armed conflicts; they were underfunded, they lacked personnel, and most had been established to stimulate economic growth and sub-regional integration. Moreover, the attempt to refashion these organizations came at a time when armed conflicts engulfed much of the continent: African governments and their external funders were thus forced to try and build effective organizations while simultaneously attempting to stem a significant number of ongoing crises. As Mark Malan put it, African governments were ‘trying to build a fire brigade while the neighbourhood burns’.[3] These attempts began under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Since the start of the twenty-first century, however, they have coalesced in a new African peace and security architecture

(APSA), which had the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its core.

To discuss these developments, the chapter begins with a brief overview of Africa's most important conflict management organizations from 1990 to the launch of the African Union (AU) in 2002. It then analyses the main elements of the African peace and security architecture, namely, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Commission, the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force and the Panel of the Wise. The basic argument is that, although significant progress was made in building this new architecture, its institutions struggled to overcome some fundamental challenges. The first was the lack of indigenous resources that African states allocated to support these institutions, which undercut their power, credibility and attempts at local ownership. The second was the persistent difficulty of overcoming the regime survival strategies pursued by many of Africa's weak states in a continent where sovereignty was usually jealously guarded.

African Conflict Management Organizations before the African Union

Between 1990 and 2002, the principal African organizations for conflict management were the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and various initiatives pursued by some of the continent's sub-regional arrangements. This section provides a brief overview of each.

The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

The immediate origins of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution lie with proposals put forward by the OAU Secretary-General, Salim Ahmed Salim, in his 1992 report ‘Resolving conflicts in Africa: proposals for action’. According to Said Djinnit, director of Salim's cabinet, during the subsequent negotiations at the OAU's Dakar summit in July 1992, ‘a clear consensus emerged against the involvement of the OAU in peacekeeping’.[4] The public rationale for this stance was that its

earlier attempt at peacekeeping in Chad (1980–2) had demonstrated that such operations were inherently difficult and that the OAU was ill-equipped for the task.[5] As discussed in chapter 10, the Nigerian-led enforcement operation in Liberia (1990–7) did not suggest things would get easier in the post-Cold War era.

The primary objective of the OAU Mechanism was thus defined as the anticipation and prevention of conflicts.[6] Rather optimistically, Africa's governments hoped that, by focusing on preventive diplomacy, they would dramatically reduce the need for subsequent peacekeeping missions on the continent. As a result, the OAU's limited vision in this area was to be able to support two 100-strong observer missions simultaneously.[7] To this end, the OAU Assembly announced the creation of the Mechanism at its June 1993 summit in Cairo, and it was inaugurated at the Tunis summit in June 1994. It included a new decision-making body called the Central Organ, which consisted of fifteen to seventeen member states elected annually from the continent's five sub-regions (on the basis of geographic representation) as well as the current and former OAU presidents.[8] A new Peace Fund was also established to finance peace and security initiatives.[9]

Table 8.1 Organization of African Unity peace operations, 1990–2002

Mission	Location	Duration	Size (approx. max.)	Main task
OAU Mission to Western Sahara	Western Sahara–Morocco	1991–unclear	Unclear	Fact-finding
OAU Military Observer Team (MOT)	Rwanda	1991	15	Observation
OAU Neutral Monitoring Group (NMOG 1)	Rwanda	1991–3	57	Observation
OAU Neutral Monitoring Group (NMOG 2)	Rwanda	1993	70	Observation
Observer Mission in Burundi (OMIB)	Burundi	1993–6	47	Observation
OAU Observer Mission in the Comoros (OMIC)	Comoros	1997–8	20	Observation
OAU Observer Mission	DRC	1999–2000	43	Observation
OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia–Eritrea (OLMEE)	Ethiopia–Eritrea	2000–8	27	Observation
OAU Military Observer Mission in Comoros 2 (OMIC 2)	Comoros	2001–2	14	Observation
OAU Mission to Comoros 3	Comoros	2002	39	Observation

Events on the continent, however, especially the mass killings in Burundi and Rwanda (1993–4), caused the OAU to revisit its self-imposed ban on peacekeeping. These episodes generated a series of internal debates organized by the OAU secretariat, which ultimately led the organization's 1995 summit to endorse the idea that ‘ready contingents’ should be earmarked within African armies for deployment on peacekeeping operations. As table 8.1 demonstrates, however, such contingents never materialized, and the Mechanism was left unable to field even one 100-strong observation mission, let alone a larger peacekeeping force. Nor was it able to recruit sufficient qualified staff: by mid-2001, only half of the envisioned forty-nine positions in the reconstituted Conflict Management Centre had been filled, and nearly half of these were only filled after 1999.[10] Nevertheless, compared with the OAU's conflict management activities during the Cold War, the new Mechanism did succeed in elevating the organization's profile. While some analysts lauded these initiatives as

evidence of ‘extraordinary activism’,[11] others saw them as a rather meagre response to the wars sweeping across Africa during the 1990s.[12]

By the late 1990s, a growing number of African voices concluded that the OAU's old approach to conflict management involved little more than symbolic meetings, with little concrete action being taken on the ground. In particular, it was felt that the organization suffered from some important problems.[13] First, because conflict parties were members of the organization they could often act as their own judges. Second, the OAU's meetings lacked a clear set of appropriate rules and procedures. As a consequence, they were plagued by poor attendance, weak chairmanship, the unavailability of comprehensive data and often unclear itineraries. In addition, because documents were usually received only at the meetings, the opportunity to hold detailed discussion was almost zero. A third set of problems resulted from the conservative conception of sovereignty held by many members. This was generally attributed to fear of foreign domination, including by sub-regional hegemons within the continent.

In sum, therefore, although the OAU made some progress in its conflict management activities, these were extremely limited and able to handle only the most minor of military tasks, primarily observation. The OAU's effective abstinence in this area opened the door for other actors.

Sub-Regional Conflict Management Mechanisms

With the OAU unable to undertake sizable peacekeeping operations and the Western world reluctant to conduct them on the African continent – especially after the Black Hawk Down episode in Mogadishu in October 1993 – it was the continent's sub-regional organizations which led the way. At the forefront was the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which revised its treaty in 1993 in large part to enable the organization to respond more effectively to security challenges. In light of its previous peace operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, in 1999 ECOWAS established its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace and Security.[14] This gave ECOWAS members the authority to devise a collective response in instances involving interstate conflict and intra-state conflict, as well as in cases of ‘massive violation of human rights and the rule of law’ or ‘[i]n the event of an

overthrow or attempted overthrow of a democratically elected Government' (Article 25). A similar development took place in southern Africa in 1996, when the Southern African Development Community (SADC) created its Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. In practice, however, the Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation was not adopted by SADC members until August 2001, nearly three years after different factions within the organization had conducted military enforcement operations in Lesotho (South Africa and Botswana) and the DRC (Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia). The other organization to embrace a similar mechanism was the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), which adopted its Protocol Relating to the Establishment of a Mutual Security Pact in Central Africa in February 2000 (entering into force in January 2004). These instruments opened up the internal affairs of SADC and ECCAS members to collective scrutiny and allowed for some type of military response.

Thus, before the AU was created, Africa's continental-level conflict management activities were restricted to the most limited end of the military spectrum, while the peace operations carried out in the name of several sub-regional organizations were generally ad hoc responses to specific crises. Part of the rationale behind dismantling the OAU and replacing it with a new union was precisely to establish a more coherent set of conflict management mechanisms with the capacity to conduct more than just small observer missions. The rest of this chapter discusses the major institutional components of what is commonly known as Africa's new peace and security architecture (APSA).

The AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government

The Assembly is the supreme organ of the African Union and defines the organization's overall objectives and policies. It consists of all fifty-four members, except those which are temporarily suspended for reasons such as non-payment of dues or because they are under political sanctions. Although the Assembly initially held ordinary summits once a year, since 2005 it has convened summits twice each year, usually in January and June. Assembly decisions are taken by consensus or, if this is not forthcoming, by

a two-thirds majority. On procedural matters, however, decisions are based on a simple majority. Two-thirds of the total membership of the AU forms a quorum at any Assembly meeting.

In substantive terms, the institutional design and procedural rules of the Assembly share many of the characteristics of the old OAU.[15] Although the AU has retained its predecessor's general prohibition on intervention within the internal affairs of member states, there have been two increasingly important exceptions: its stance on unconstitutional changes of government and its new right of humanitarian intervention (codified in Article 4(h) of the AU's Constitutive Act, adopted in Lomé, Togo, in July 2001). Both these issues require some explanation.

Unconstitutional changes of government

In July 2000, the OAU Assembly institutionalized its rejection of what it called ‘unconstitutional changes in government’ on the continent.[16] This was a highly significant decision, given that postcolonial Africa had endured a large number of coups d’état. Between 1952 and 1990, there were 63 successful military coups in Africa. From 1991 to mid-2015, there were another 27.[17] In addition, since the 1950s there were well over 100 failed coup attempts. West Africa was the centre of activity, accounting for 50 per cent of these coups, but the phenomenon was widespread, with 33 African states experiencing at least one successful coup since 1952.

Coups d’état became frequent in Africa in the latter half of the 1960s. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the OAU's limited resources and its founding commitment to non-intervention in the internal affairs of its members, the organization's traditional response had been official indifference. Coups thus disrupted the pattern of African diplomacy only marginally if they disrupted it at all. Interestingly, while coups were tolerated, Article III(5) of the OAU charter outlawed assassination of political leaders and ‘subversive activities’.[18] The OAU continued with this approach even after the Cold War ended and in the face of intensified international calls for democratization. Indeed, according to Patrick McGowan, between 1990 and 2001 it had to deal with fifty coup attempts, of which thirteen were successful.[19]

The turning point in the OAU's approach came during the second half of the 1990s. The key cases appear to have been Major Pierre Buyoya's coup in Burundi in July 1996 and the series of coups during Sierra Leone's civil war, which culminated with the ousting of the democratically elected president, Ahmed Kabbah, in May 1997. In Buyoya's case the OAU imposed sanctions and a blockade. The reaction to Kabbah's ousting was more strident: the coup was widely condemned internationally, the OAU decided that other states had a duty not to cooperate with Johnny Paul Koroma's junta, and ECOMOG forces were used to help reinstall Kabbah's government.[20]

The task of building congruence between international standards on democracy and African politics was made easier for the OAU by the decision of both the Organization of American States and later the UN Security Council to authorize enforcement action against the military junta that took power in Haiti in 1991.[21] Although the Security Council emphasized the extraordinary nature of events in Haiti, it also condemned Buyoya's actions in Burundi and authorized similar enforcement measures against Koroma's junta in Sierra Leone. After initially issuing a presidential statement condemning the coup d'état, the Security Council placed Sierra Leone on its agenda in response to a letter from Nigeria's ambassador to the UN on behalf of the ECOWAS Committee of Four on Sierra Leone (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Nigeria). As chair of the OAU, Zimbabwe had echoed the committee's concerns in the Security Council. After several months of debate, the Security Council passed Resolution 1132, authorizing action against the junta, on 8 October 1997.

It was not until July 2000, however, that the OAU moved from adopting ad hoc responses to institutionalizing a permanent framework under the Lomé Declaration.[22] This defined unconstitutional changes of government as involving either a military coup d'état, mercenaries or armed dissidents/rebels replacing a democratically elected government or an incumbent government refusing to relinquish power to the winning party after free, fair and regular elections. Since then, the new AU has consistently condemned all coups. But this policy raised two controversial issues: first, whether there was such a thing as a 'good coup' – i.e. when the military ousted a tyrannical regime and promised to set the stage for

democratization. The coup in Mauritania in 2005, for example, was explicitly discussed in these terms.[23]

A second issue concerned the Assembly's narrow definition of unconstitutional changes in government, which it saw as synonymous with coups or an incumbent refusing to cede power after a free and fair election. But there were other relevant scenarios. For example, what should the AU do if incumbent presidents rewrote constitutions to extend their term of office? What if presidents illegally dismissed their parliaments, or if clearly fraudulent elections were held? Or, what if a government remained in power without ever holding elections?

In recognition of such concerns, by 2007 an internal debate had started over the extent to which the Union's focus ‘must be enlarged to cover all forms of manipulations which either culminate in a coup d’état or in a democratically elected government re-forging the constitution without popular consent as genuinely expressed by the people, with a view to prolonging stay in office’.[24] Also in 2007, the AU adopted its Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which banned perpetrators of coups from participating in subsequent elections. This became legally binding in February 2012. The two main outcomes occurred in 2009: the AU created a new Committee on Sanctions, which would assess the different dimensions of the problem, monitor the implementation of any sanctions regimes and report back to the Peace and Security Council, and it adopted the Ezulwini framework document, which took a more appropriate wider view of unconstitutional changes of government.[25] At the AU summit in early 2010, the organization's new chairman, Malawi's President Bingu wa Mutharika, said that it was time to ‘declare war on unconstitutional changes of government on African soil’. By this stage, most analysts agreed that the AU had a much improved, though far from perfect, record of challenging unconstitutional changes of government on the continent.[26]

And then came the Arab uprisings of 2011. These put the issue of popular protests firmly onto the AU's agenda but also reignited the broader debate over unconstitutional changes of government.[27] First, it was unclear whether a change of government stimulated by popular uprisings, as occurred in Tunisia and Egypt, represented an unconstitutional change of government. The fall of Gaddafi's regime in Libya was different, since the

popular uprising quickly spiralled into a civil war, which the AU condemned and hence refused to recognize the legitimacy of the new transitional authorities. The events in Tunisia and Egypt left the AU with a stark choice: side with the demonstrators or the governments they ousted. The AU chose the demonstrators.[28] But later, in July 2013, the AU suspended Egypt from participating in its activities after the subsequently elected government of President Mohamed Morsi was overthrown by the military.[29] A second area of debate was over how to define 'the successful restoration of constitutional order'.[30] Not only was the AU unclear on this matter, it also generated disagreements between the AU and some of the RECs, notably between ECOWAS and the AU over the cases of Mali and Guinea-Bissau, and between the AU and ECCAS in the case of CAR. The issue became even more confusing in June 2014, when the AU lifted its earlier suspension of Egypt despite the fact that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi had been a central player in the country's earlier unconstitutional change of government in July 2013. The third, and in many ways most fundamental issue was how the AU could address the existing democratic deficits in some of its member states; deficits that were the root cause of most unconstitutional attempts to overthrow incumbent regimes. In sum, how could the AU encourage democratic reforms and thus avoid the prospect of future unconstitutional changes? This is the heart of the matter, but the AU has yet to come up with a solution.

An African right of humanitarian intervention?

In a radical departure from the OAU days, Article 4(h) of the AU Constitutive Act gave the Assembly the right to intervene in a member state 'in respect of grave circumstances: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity'. In the most thorough analysis available of why Article 4(h) was adopted, Carolyn Haggis argued that the specific text resulted from a rather odd confluence of Libya's lobbying for a stronger AU with powers to mobilize collectively against external aggression and the moral impetus to stop mass atrocities provided by the timely release of the OAU's report on the international failure to prevent Rwanda's 1994 genocide. Once the Libyans had placed the issue of intervention on the transition agenda, other African states – notably Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria – were responsible for finessing the wording to represent a limited right of African intervention

in cases where mass atrocities were being committed rather than the Libyan preference for collective intervention to maintain order and stability within individual states.[31]

Unhappy at the final outcome, in February 2003 Libya led the charge to amend Article 4(h), requesting that it be changed to read as follows (the additional text is in italics):

> the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity *as well as a serious threat to legitimate order to restore peace and stability to the Member State of the Union upon the recommendation of the Peace and Security Council*.[32]

The amendment was officially adopted by the Assembly on 11 July 2003. No member state dissented or made reservations, but as of mid-2015 it had not yet entered into force, as only twenty-eight AU members had deposited their instruments of ratification.[33]

Article 4(h) also raised some thorny political and legal implications. First, the idea that the AU Assembly can authorize the use of military force for humanitarian purposes without the host government's consent stands in direct contradiction of Article 53 of the UN Charter.[34] Perhaps in recognition of this problem, by 2005 the *Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force* (discussed below) explicitly stated that ‘the AU will seek UN Security Council authorisation of its enforcements actions. Similarly, the RECs/Regions will seek AU authorisation of their interventions.’[35]

Second, during the period under review here (1990–2015), Article 4(h) proved so politically toxic that the AU never once invoked it to justify military intervention against the wishes of a recognized sovereign government.[36] As the international debates over the war in Darfur highlighted, despite clear evidence of ‘grave circumstances’ as the AU defines them, the Assembly was unwilling to countenance the use of military force without the consent of the government of Sudan. Indeed, a considerable amount of time during AU summits in 2005, 2006 and 2007 was spent debating whether to make Sudan's president chairman of the

Assembly (in the event, this did not occur). In the case of Libya in early 2011, the AU also decided not to invoke Article 4(h). This was in spite of three African states (Gabon, Nigeria and South Africa) voting for UN Security Council resolution 1973, which identified an imminent threat to civilians in Benghazi and authorized military intervention to protect civilians in Libya without the consent of Gaddafi's regime.[37] Third, even if the Assembly was to invoke Article 4(h) in order to conduct a humanitarian intervention, without an effective African Standby Force the AU lacked the multilateral military capability to carry out such an operation, except against its smallest and weakest member states.[38] Despite these three important problems, the inclusion of Article 4(h) certainly changed the tenor of debates about conflict management on the continent.

The African Union Commission

The Commission provides the bureaucratic support – both preparatory and executive – which enables the AU to function. During the 1990s the OAU equivalent had been starved of resources and thus was unable to do much more than keep itself afloat. With the establishment of the AU, however, the Commission was bolstered in terms of both staff and resources and in the sense that the Assembly envisaged an enhanced role for the chairperson compared with that of the previous secretary-general of the OAU.[39] The Commission consists of eight portfolios or departments and is headed by a chairperson and deputy chairperson.[40] With regard to issues of peace and security, the two most relevant departments are Political Affairs (which has responsibility for human rights, democratic institutions, transparency and accountability, and the monitoring of elections) and the Peace and Security Department. In practice, the latter took the leading role, not least because it received most external attention and because it was the largest of the Commission's substantive departments. However, this is all relative: to manage the entire spectrum of the AU's peace and security challenges, the Peace and Security Department was granted only sixty-four regular positions. As of mid-2015, it had been able to fill less than half of them due to financial constraints.[41]

The Commission's primary tasks involved steering the ongoing process of institutionalization, harnessing support from AU member states and donors,

and promoting collaboration between the AU and the sub-regional organizations.[42] It was given a significant boost towards achieving these objectives when, in July 2003, an active former president, Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali, was elected to act as chairperson. He played an important role in exercising leverage on behalf of the AU Commission. In early 2008, Konaré was replaced by the former Gabonese foreign minister, Jean Ping, a longstanding and well-respected representative at the UN. The fact that Ping was not a former head of state raised concerns over whether his appointment signalled a downgrading of the Commission's status. On the basis of his first two years in office, however, Ping managed to retain the Commission's autonomous power; especially during Muammar Gaddafi's tenure as AU chairman (2009–10), this was no mean feat. In October 2012, Ping was defeated in a highly toxic and protracted struggle by Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, South Africa's former foreign minister, ex-wife of President Jacob Zuma, and the first woman to hold the position. This was the most controversial process the AU had experienced, requiring four rounds of voting and involving lots of public infighting within the organization. While many Anglophone African countries viewed Ping as ineffective, he retained considerable support in Francophone areas. However, South Africa's decision to field a candidate violated the unwritten rule that one of Africa's ‘big five’ states (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa) would not seek to hold this office. Zuma's candidacy thus generated significant criticism from many smaller African states and controversy ensued. Once selected, Zuma did little to placate her critics, surrounding herself with advisers drawn from South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress, and operating a highly opaque and often unresponsive office.

On the basis of the Union's first few years, some analysts went as far as to suggest that, ‘as the custodian of AU documents, as well as the maker and interpreter of rules, procedures and regulations, [the Commission] acquired unlimited and overwhelming power’.[43] But this exaggerates the Commission's influence. As Mark Malan noted, especially as far as peacekeeping issues were concerned, it lacked ‘the staff and the expertise to plan and conduct missions, and it certainly lacks the institutional capacity to absorb at the same time a confusing array of donor capacity-building assistance packages and schemes.’[44] Since 2011, many of these roles have

been supported by personnel from the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) and with funds from external donors.

In relation to the Peace and Security Council (PSC) specifically (see below), the Commission personnel could certainly exercise some leverage, both through their role in drafting reports and recommendations, and in their ability to influence how the member states view particular issues.[45] This influence was arguably greatest in the Commission's dealings with smaller delegations at the PSC and when it held its meetings at the ambassadorial and ministerial levels. It was much more restricted when dealing with heads of government. As far as the latter group was concerned, it was arguably only Commissioner Konaré, himself a former head of state, who could regularly succeed in significantly altering their perspectives. Overall, however, the AU's member states clearly kept the Commission in general and the PSC's secretariat in particular in an emaciated condition. As a consequence, the AU Commission had to rely on external funds, including to hire most of its own staff.

The Peace and Security Council[46]

Officially launched in May 2004, the PSC is ‘a collective security and early-warning arrangement to facilitate timely and efficient response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa’.[47] More specifically, its objectives were defined as promoting peace, security and stability in Africa; anticipating and preventing conflicts; promoting and implementing peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction activities; coordinating and harmonizing continental efforts in the prevention and combating of international terrorism in all its aspects; developing a common defence policy for the Union; and encouraging democratic practices, good governance and the rule of law, as well as protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. In order to achieve these daunting objectives, the PSC was given eighteen ‘powers’, ranging from assisting in the provision of humanitarian assistance to military intervention.

The PSC was not part of the AU Constitutive Act but emerged out of an ad hoc process to reform the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The initial substantive proposal had been for a

council of seventeen states, ten of which would be permanent members. Although this position was supported by the continent's ‘great powers’ – South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt and Libya – it was unacceptable to other states, notably Tanzania, which rejected the idea of permanent membership and any potential veto power conferred upon individual states.[48] The resulting compromise was that the draft *PSC Protocol* discussed by the Council of Ministers prior to the AU's Durban summit set out three options concerning the composition of the PSC: (1) fifteen members elected for a term of two years; (2) fifteen members of whom five would be permanent and ten elected for a term of two years; and (3) ten members elected for a term of two years, and an additional five members for a term of three years.[49] The third proposal was carried.

The PSC's membership is based on the principle of ‘equitable regional representation and rotation’ (Article 5), whereby the north, west, central, east and southern regions present candidates for election.[50] Article 5 also lists criteria on which to judge prospective candidates, including whether the state in question is in good standing (has paid its dues, respects constitutional governance and the rule of law, etc.) and whether it is willing and able to shoulder the responsibilities that membership would place upon it. Retiring members of the PSC are eligible for immediate re-election. Table 8.2 lists the thirty-nine states elected to serve as PSC members between 2004 and 2016. It is notable that some of them showed little respect for constitutional governance, the rule of law and human rights, and several of them experienced violent conflicts during their period as PSC members. Nigeria is the only country to have sat consistently on the Council since 2004. This generated some grumblings because it undermined the PSC's explicit rejection of the idea of permanent members and the *Protocol*'s emphasis on specific criteria for membership.

Table 8.2 Membership of the AU Peace and Security Council, 2004–16

Region	2004 (years elected)	2006 (years elected)	2007 (years elected)	2008 (years elected)	2010 (years elected)	2012 (years elected)	2013 (years elected)	2014 (years elected)
North	*Algeria* (3)		*Algeria* (3)		*Libya* (3)		*Algeria* (3)	
North	**Libya** (2)	**Egypt** (2)		**Tunisia** (2)	**Mauritania** (2)	*Egypt* (2)		*Libya* (2)
West	*Nigeria* (3)		*Nigeria* (3)		*Nigeria* (3)		*Nigeria* (3)	
West	**Togo** (2)	Burkina Faso (2)		Burkina Faso (2)	*Côte d'Ivoire* (2)	**Côte d'Ivoire** (2)		Niger (2)
West	Ghana (2)	Ghana (2)		Benin (2)	Benin (2)	Guinea (2)		Guinea (2)
West	Senegal (2)	*Senegal* (2)		Mali (2)	Mali (2)	**Gambia** (2)		**Gambia** (2)
Central	**Gabon** (3)		Gabon (3)		**Eq. Guinea** (3)		**Eq. Guinea** (3)	
Central	Congo (2)	Congo (2)		*Chad* (2)	*Chad* (2)	**Congo** (2)		Burundi (2)
Central	**Cameroon** (2)	**Cameroon** (2)		*Burundi* (2)	Burundi (2)	**Cameroon** (2)		**Chad** (2)
East	*Ethiopia* (3)		*Ethiopia* (3)		Kenya (3)		Uganda (3)	
East	Kenya (2)	**Rwanda** (2)		**Rwanda** (2)	**Rwanda** (2)	Tanzania (2)		Tanzania (2)
East	*Sudan* (2)	Uganda (2)		Uganda (2)	Djibouti (2)	**Djibouti** (2)		**Ethiopia** (2)
Southern	South Africa (3)		**Angola** (3)		**Zimbabwe** (3)		Mozambique (3)	
Southern	Lesotho (2)	Botswana (2)		**Swaziland** (2)	Namibia (2)	**Angola** (2)		South Africa (2)
Southern	Mozambique (2)	Malawi (2)		Zambia (2)	South Africa (2)	Lesotho (2)		Namibia (2)

Italicized: States experiencing a 'severe crisis' / 'limited war' or 'war' according to the Heidelberg Conflict Barometer, 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 at http://hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/index.html.
Bold: States declared 'not free' by Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 at www.freedomhouse.org. The survey measures freedom – the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centers of potential domination – according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties.

The Council's procedural rules stipulate that its decisions 'shall generally be guided by the principle of consensus' (Article 8). If consensus cannot be reached, however, it 'shall adopt its decisions on procedural matters by a simple majority, while decisions on all other matters shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote of its Members voting'. Between 2004 and mid-2015, all decisions within the PSC had been taken by consensus (details of the deliberations have not been made public). The PSC is officially in permanent session and able to assemble at any time. Most of its meetings have been held in Addis Ababa (where it is based), although it has also convened elsewhere, both inside and outside Africa. In August 2007, the PSC adopted a new set of working methods which suggested it should convene four types of session: public meetings (which the media may observe), private or closed meetings (involving only AU member states or AU organs), consultations (discussing briefings from the Commission and draft decisions) and 'Arria-type meetings', where Council members hold informal discussions with non-state entities outside the official meeting chamber.[51] By mid-2015, the PSC had held well over 500 meetings, imposed sanctions against regimes in several African states (including Togo, Mauritania, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Niger, Eritrea, Mali, Egypt, and CAR) and authorized peace operations in Sudan, the

Comoros (three times), Somalia, Central Africa, Mali, CAR, and against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin region.[52]

In substantive terms, the PSC devoted relatively little attention either to the prevention of conflict or to structural issues that encourage 'bad governance'. Instead it tried to extinguish crises (usually armed conflicts or coups) after they erupted.[53] Although it addressed a large number of such incidents, some conflicts did not make it onto the agenda – e.g. the insurgencies in the Niger Delta, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, and northern Uganda or the continued tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The hugely violent Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria only made it onto the agenda in 2014. Nor did tyrannical governments that managed to prevent coups and insurgencies, such as Robert Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe or Muammar Gaddafi's Libya, occupy much space on the Council's agenda. In this sense, the PSC's willingness to debate the violent aftermath of Kenya's elections in December 2007 indicated a softening of this approach. Since then, the PSC has faced growing pressure to address a variety of impending crises, including in Libya, Mali, CAR and most recently, in Burundi.

The PSC also devoted little attention to the non-military dimensions of security, such as environmental degradation, organized crime and disease. Discussions within the Commission did raise the possibility of broadening the Council's remit in this regard, but this had not happened by mid-2015.[54]

Overall, the PSC made considerable progress in ironing out its working methods, organizing its meetings, and authorizing a wide range of peace operations and mediation initiatives (see chapters 9 and 10).[55] In sum, if the PSC did not exist, it would be wise to invent it. But, unsurprisingly, a range of challenges continues to hobble the institution. First, it is still composed of too many states that do not meet the official criteria for membership set out in Article 5(2) of the *PSC Protocol* (2002). Second, it has a rather poor record of implementing its decisions, in part because it has given little thought to the resource implications of its decisions in a context where it receives little and unpredictable funding from AU members. The PSC even lacks funds for an adequate secretariat, which must organize the council's many activities with just a handful of staff. Third, it still has only very limited practical capacities to exercise significant leverage over conflict

parties. A fourth problem is the lack of clarity governing the relationship between the PSC and the RECs, in large part because the principle of ‘subsidiarity’ remains unclear. Similar coordination problems have also been evident in its relations with other stakeholders, including the African states elected onto the UN Security Council. Finally, as the following discussion of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) shows, there is limited political will to translate early warning into early and decisive action.

The Continental Early Warning System

Early warning of violent conflicts did not become a significant issue for African organizations until the 1990s, particularly after the Rwandan genocide. At this stage the OAU Secretariat's Division for Conflict Management was created to collect, collate and disseminate information relating to current and potential conflicts and devise response options. And although the process of establishing a CEWS officially started at the OAU summit in Dakar in June 1992, nothing substantive occurred until June 1995, when the OAU Council of Ministers endorsed a proposal to establish such a system. This was given further endorsement by the OAU heads of state in the Yaounde Declaration of July 1996.[56] The main substantive outcome of these endorsements was the creation of a situation room in Addis Ababa two years later, the purpose of which was to gather information and alert the Secretary-General of ‘looming crises’.[57] However, with few staff and financial resources, the situation room did not come close to resembling an early warning system.

With the establishment of the AU and the *PSC Protocol*, progress started to be made.[58] Starting in 2003, the AU Commission organized a series of workshops and consultations through which it developed with African and international consultants a roadmap for the implementation of the CEWS. Along the way, it received capacity-building support from, among other sources, the EU and UNDP, as well as the governments of Denmark, Germany and the United States. The German GIZ played a particularly significant role in this process.

The subsequent CEWS was to consist of two parts. At the continental level there would be a central observation and monitoring centre (the Situation

Room) in Addis Ababa to collect and analyse data. The second component was the ‘observation and monitoring units of the Regional Mechanisms’, which would ‘collect and process data at their level and transmit the same to the Situation Room’.[59]

As summarized by the head of the AU Commission's Conflict Management Division, the CEWS was intended to provide ‘timely advice on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa to several key AU institutions, including the Chairperson of the Commission, the PSC and the Panel of the Wise’.[60] This was to be done using quantitative and qualitative methods of conflict analysis to detect the warning signs of violent conflicts, monitor their development, and formulate policy and response options. The CEWS did not focus on warning about natural disasters. In terms of sources, it drew information from a variety of outlets both inside and outside the continent, including international organizations, NGOs, the media, academia and think-tanks.[61] It also produced its own data through AU field missions and liaison offices as well as those generated by the continent's sub-regional organizations.[62]

One of the central challenges for the CEWS was defining its relationship with the various sub-regional early warning mechanisms already in existence, notably the IGAD Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) and the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN).[63] The former was mandated ‘to receive and share information concerning potential violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD sub-region’.[64] Since June 2003, CEWARN has monitored and tracked cross-border pastoral and related conflicts in the two pilot areas of the Karamoja and Somali Clusters (these pilot areas were subsequently expanded). Interestingly, between 2003 and 2006 it recorded approximately 2,200 conflict-related deaths in the region.[65] The ECOWAS Peace and Security Observation System was established under the 1999 Mechanism and consists of an Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC) – based at the ECOWAS Secretariat in Abuja – and four zonal offices which report back to the OMC.[66] SADC also created an early warning system, but it was integrated into the region's intelligence communities and based on classified information. It utilized the National Early Warning Centres in

each SADC member state and a Regional Early Warning Centre based in Gaborone, Botswana.

By mid-2009 the CEWS had significantly refined its operating procedures and defined its three main tasks as data collection and analysis, early warning and engagement with decision-makers, and coordination and collaboration with other actors.[67] In institutional terms, the Situation Room was able to provide coverage twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and was producing a range of reporting mechanisms, including daily news summaries as well as more substantial updates on emerging issues. By this stage, however, the CEWS was not yet providing warnings directly to the PSC. Although it had some input into the reports that went before the PSC, its staff were unable to generate early discussions within the Council on the crisis surrounding the Kenyan elections in 2007 or the instability in Guinea-Bissau in late 2008. The delicate balancing act before the CEWS is that its mandate states that it should only provide information rather than engage in the process of making policy. Resources were also identified as a problem, particularly the need to recruit more and better trained analysts and to acquire the appropriate IT infrastructure.

Six years later, the CEWS was still struggling to gather information and make a political impact. There remained basic problems with its IT infrastructure in the AU Commission and a lack of connectivity between most of the RECs and the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa. The CEWS remains stuck with analysis of largely open-source reportage as the AU and the RECs have few of their own sources of information scattered throughout the continent and intelligence sharing remains embryonic at best across AU member states. Nor is the CEWS mandated to collect more general information about governance and under-development and fuse it with its work on peace and security. Once compiled, the CEWS products are circulated to a very small group of people within the AU. Moreover, it remains unclear if these products are actually useful for the AU decision-makers. Finally, the CEWS has encountered problems hiring and retaining staff with the necessary qualifications to effectively engage decision-making at the PSC.

The African Standby Force

If African governments cannot prevent armed conflicts, they will be required to manage their consequences. A crucial instrument in the envisaged response is the African Standby Force (ASF). Its immediate origins lie with a meeting of military experts and observers from forty-five African states in Harare from 21 to 23 October 1997.[68] Although various proposals were made, it was not until May 2003 that a framework was agreed for the ASF, based on five regional brigades of approximately 4,300 troops and some 500 light vehicles each.[69] A few years later, the brigades were renamed as ‘regional forces’ because they also included police and civilian components. Table 8.3 lists the membership of these regional forces. The ASF is thus based on three interconnected levels: the continental level (notably the AU Commission's planning element), the sub-regional level (the five regional forces) and the state level (the contributing countries).[70] Because the five proposed regional forces did not fit neatly onto Africa's existing RECs in the eastern and northern regions, the ASF required the creation of two new mechanisms to cover these areas: the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF) and the North African Regional Capability (NARC).

Table 8.3 African Standby Force regional membership

Central (CASF)	Southern (SASF)	Eastern (EASF)	Northern (NARC)	Western (ECOWAS SF)
Angola		Burundi	Algeria	Benin
DR Congo		Comoros	Egypt	Burkina Faso
Cameroon	Botswana	Djibouti	Libya	Cape Verde
Central African Republic	Lesotho	Ethiopia	Mauritania	Côte d'Ivoire
Chad	Madagascar	Kenya	Tunisia	Gambia
Congo	Malawi	Rwanda	Western Sahara	Ghana
Equatorial Guinea	Mauritius	Seychelles		Guinea
Gabon	Mozambique	Somalia		Guinea-Bissau
São Tome et Principé	Namibia	Sudan		Liberia
	Seychelles	Uganda		Mali
	South Africa			Niger
	Swaziland			Nigeria
	Tanzania	Eritrea		Senegal
	Zambia	South Sudan		Sierra Leone
	Zimbabwe			Togo

The original concept presented to the AU defence and security chiefs in 2003 was for a single on-call standby brigade level force that would be available to the AU on the model of the UN's Standby High Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG). In practice, however, the sub-regional level played the crucial intermediary role, which raised questions and complications, including those related to overlapping memberships and sub-regional decision-making structures.[71] In addition, earlier proposals included a sixth ASF brigade to be stationed in Addis Ababa and kept on high alert. This idea was rejected by the African chiefs of defence staff at their May 2003 meeting, apparently after particularly strong objections from South Africa.[72]

In its current configuration the force developed largely along the lines set out in the March 2005 *Roadmap* (although there have now been three Roadmaps, the last one setting the deadline for the end of 2015).[73] This envisaged the ASF responding to six crisis management scenarios (see table

8.4). The plan was for it to have the capacity to manage the entire spectrum of scenarios anywhere in Africa (or perhaps beyond) by 30 June 2010.[74] Unfortunately, the original timetable was not met. Instead, by 2010 four of the five regional forces had attained what was called Initial Operating Capacity (tested through their participation in a training exercise called Amani Exercise 1). This meant they were supposed to be able to conduct the ASF operational scenarios 1–4. The exception was the northern region, where the NARC was basically non-existent. With this limited progress, attention briefly switched to developing a smaller rapid deployment capability for between 1,500 and 3,000 from within the regional forces. The objective was that 'the deployment must be rapid (within 14 days of securing a mandate) and robust to contain the situation and protect itself. Furthermore, it must be self sufficient for at least 30 days.'[75]

Table 8.4 African Standby Force design scenarios

Source: AU, *Roadmap*, section A-1.

Scenario	Description	Deployment requirement (from mandate resolution)
1	AU/regional military advice to a political mission	30 days
2	AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with a UN mission	30 days
3	Stand-alone AU/regional observer mission	30 days
4	AU/regional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions (and peacebuilding)	30 days
5	AU peacekeeping force for complex multidimensional peacekeeping missions, including those involving low-level spoilers	90 days, with the military component being able to deploy in 30 days
6	AU intervention, e.g. in genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly	14 days with robust military force[a]

[a] Here, 'robust' meant around 2,500 troops (1,000 within fourteen days, and a further 1,500 within the following fortnight) on the ground within thirty days (Cilliers, *The African Standby Force*, p. 10).

In light of the AU's inability to fully operationalize even the ASF rapid deployment concept and with specific reference to the failure of African states to rapidly deploy troops in Mali's 2012 crisis, in early 2013 the AU unveiled the 'African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises' (ACIRC).[76] Drawing from a reservoir of 5,000 troops, the plan was for the ACIRC to comprise tactical battle groups of 1,500 military personnel deployed by a Lead Nation or a group of AU member states and which would be sustainable for 30 days. Its purpose was to conduct stabilization and enforcement missions, neutralize terrorist groups and provide emergency assistance to AU member states. Unlike the ASF regional

standby forces, the ACIRC was designed as a purely military capability without police or civilian elements. This new concept generated considerable debate. Some AU members preferred to keep the emphasis on the ASF regional forces and rapid deployment capability. Others saw the ACIRC as a necessary interim measure given the inability of APSA institutions to rapidly deploy to the recent crises in Mali, and later, CAR.[77] The subsequent compromise fashioned by the AU was that the ACIRC should be conceived as a temporary and interim phase in the development of the ASF.

Essentially, ACIRC was a response to the failure of the ASF concept in three key areas, all of which were starkly exposed by the international response to the crisis in Mali in 2012. First, a perception that the ASF decision-making process was cumbersome and problematic, especially with regard to ASF Scenario 6 operations that required authority from the AU Assembly (a body that usually meets only twice a year). Nor was it clear whether the region or the AU should lead the response. Under ACIRC, the deployment decision would be taken by the PSC, which would then form a suitable coalition of the willing from the pledged volunteer countries. Second, unlike the ASF concept that requires AU support from day one, the ACIRC volunteers pledged that they would sustain their troops in the field for 30 days before requesting assistance. Third, ACIRC would be continental in scope in contrast to the ASF's focus on regional forces, which some considered unduly constraining as many of the existing crises facing the APSA have not directly corresponded to the ASF regions. In Mali, for instance, non-ECOWAS contributions from Chad and Algeria were necessary; in Somalia, troops beyond IGAD from Burundi and Sierra Leone as well as Nigerian police proved crucial, and Rwandan troops from outside of ECCAS played important roles in the AU force in CAR. The continental scope and the flexibility built into a coalition of the willing/Lead Nation concept is thus probably the ACIRC's biggest draw.

By late 2015, the debates continued but additional progress was made inasmuch as the Amani 2 training exercise saw the ASF declared operational. Although the northern region had made minimal progress, the ASF's four other regions were theoretically capable of deployment if authorized by the PSC. In that sense, the ASF had not reached its complete

operational capacity, but had officially attained enough operational capacity to deploy if called upon.

Although the ASF clearly represented a radical departure from the old OAU days of conflict management, it continued to face a range of political and technical challenges. On the technical side, several issues stood out. First, any multinational force requires its different national components to be interoperable – that is, to combine and work together effectively. The problem is, 'the more multinational a force, the more difficult it is to train and operate'.[78] Assuming the regional forces would need to cooperate in the field, the ASF is a very multinational force, incorporating nearly twice as many states as NATO or the EU. Developing common doctrine, systems, tactics, techniques and procedures is therefore difficult, especially where different colonial legacies have caused security forces to develop along different trajectories. A second technical challenge concerned command and control structures. The problem here, as military experts pointed out, was that the ASF vision lacked an operational level of command – there is the AU Peace and Security Directorate and the ASF regional forces, but nothing in between.[79] Strategic lift capabilities, or lack of them, posed a third challenge. To date, the AU remained dependent on donors such as NATO and EU states to provide airlift support.[80] Once in the field, the AU could only maintain its forces with effective logistics. Yet this too was commonly described as a 'hugely problematic' area.[81] A proposed solution to this problem was the establishment of the Africa Logistics Council in late 2013. Meeting on a monthly basis, the council is made up of the AU (led by the Peace Support Operations Division within the Commission) and international partners (currently the UN, EU, US, UK and France). Its main objectives are to share information regarding logistical challenges, develop standardized planning procedures, place greater international attention on these challenges, and act as a multinational clearing house for logistics requirements.

On the political side of the equation, an effective ASF required 'an extraordinarily high level of inter-state cooperation including difficult decisions regarding political processes and military details'.[82] While most African states officially consented to this cooperation, in practice it represented an incredibly daunting task. In addition, as with other parts of the APSA, African governments did not inject sufficient financial resources

into the ASF. Consequently, analysts frequently concluded that ‘the lack of adequate financial resources to meet the demands of peacekeeping in Africa remains the most obvious hurdle’.[83] Nothing had changed as of mid-2015. A third political challenge was the need to ensure that the countries the AU selects to build capacity will actually deploy those assets when the Union calls. Here, as one military expert noted, ‘Building capacity in countries that will not support continent-wide peace operations will only waste precious resources.’[84] A fourth issue was the size of the ASF. Even when fully operational, the APSA institutions would be able to field one large peace operation of a maximum of about 22,000 personnel. Given that the UN had been required to deploy about half a dozen large peace operations simultaneously across the continent, the APSA could only ever provide a supporting role to the UN system, which would be still be required to play the leading role in most theatres. The UN–AU partnership would thus remain crucial even after the APSA was finished.[85] A fifth problem was the increasing gap between the original ASF policy framework and its six operational scenarios and the realities of the broader security agenda confronting Africa. In particular, with its heavily military focus, the ASF framework did not adequately address several important baskets of contemporary security challenges, including maritime issues, organized crime, terrorism, environmental degradation or health pandemics. It remains to be seen if the ASF can be reformed to provide a useful part of the response to the broader peace and security challenges facing the AU.

The Panel of the Wise

Article 11 of the *PSC Protocol* called for the establishment of the Panel of the Wise to support the work of the PSC and the AU Commission. It was to be comprised of people who have made ‘outstanding’ past contributions to peace, security and development. The panellists were to be elected for three-year terms by the AU Assembly, following proposals from the chairperson of the AU Commission. In large part because of arguments over the panel's composition, remit and funding, it was not until July 2007 that the first five members were named (from Africa's five sub-regions). The panel's modalities were not confirmed by the PSC until November 2007 and the panel was not inaugurated until the following month. It was also a little

disconcerting that the first chairman, former Algerian president Ahmed Ben Bella, was ninety-one years old. The Panel did not hold a formal meeting with the PSC until March 2009 and since then interaction has been limited.

The main tasks of the Panel of the Wise lay in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. More specifically, it was to facilitate communication channels between conflict parties and the PSC and AU Commission, carry out fact-finding missions where there is danger of armed conflict breaking out or escalating, engage in shuttle diplomacy between conflict parties and encourage dialogue between them, develop confidence-building measures, carry out reconciliation processes, assist mediation teams engaged in formal negotiations, and help other parties to implement peace agreements.[86] Since its inauguration, the PSC has identified five criteria which should guide the panellists in setting their agenda:

1. the degree to which a conflict situation already receives regional or international attention or not;
2. whether the PSC is already seized with a particular conflict situation and whether additional attention by the panel may add further to existing efforts;
3. whether a given situation has remained in conflict for a considerable amount of time or is in danger of descending into conflict despite multiple ongoing mediation and negotiation efforts;
4. whether a conflict situation has experienced a sudden and speedy decline;
5. whether a conflict situation has experienced difficulties in implementing a peace agreement and, therefore, faces the risk of reverting to conflict.[87]

In practice, the panel engaged with a variety of political crises, including those in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar and Zimbabwe. It also undertook some low-level activity in countries that were scheduled to hold elections and made the issue of electoral violence its main focus. There is widespread consensus, however, that, without more serious staffing and resources, the panel will not be able to function as the dynamic and proactive advisory body envisaged in the *PSC Protocol*.[88] As with the other

APSA institutions, the panel remained almost entirely dependent on funding from external donors.

Conclusion

As of mid-2015, Africa's new peace and security architecture remained a work in progress. It is therefore impossible to draw definitive conclusions, but it is possible to identify the principal political challenges of the journey so far.

The first persistent challenge was the lack of funds African governments devoted to these conflict management initiatives. Recall that between 1993 and 2005 the OAU/AU Peace Fund received a total of approximately $68 million, of which roughly $45 million was provided by non-AU members.[89] Since then, the Peace Fund has limped along with never more than $6m in the kitty between 2006 and 2014. Of the money supplied by the AU members, the vast majority came from just five states – Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria and South Africa. Since 1 January 2006, each country contributed 15 per cent of the AU's regular budget. As of January 2014, that rate was set at just under 13 per cent. In the interim period, during the Arab uprisings of 2011–12, Algeria, Egypt and Libya failed to pay at all, placing the AU in even greater financial straits. In an attempt to at least partially share the burden, in 2009, the AU Assembly agreed that its members would raise their contributions to the Peace Fund from 6 per cent to 12 per cent between 2011 and 2014. But by 2014 they had in practice increased only to 7 per cent. In sum, since the APSA project was started, external donors have paid for almost all the AU's peace and security activities. Arguably the most thorough study of the AU's finances summarized the situation in the following manner:

> Although member states' willingness to contribute to Union affairs has slightly increased recently, in comparison to external support the amount of money allocated to the continental project by member states is still embarrassingly low. And this seems not to be a matter of non-existent resources of their own, but simply misplaced political priorities, which in turn raises a serious question of ownership and commitment. Who in the end owns and is driving the African Union? And how sustainable can an integration project be that is supported by its member states only so faintly and, at the same time, to such a large extent is depending on external finance? To some extent, dependency seems to be a matter of choice.[90]

In 2013, an AU panel led by former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo proposed taxing tourism and international air travel on the continent as a means of generating more indigenous financing for the APSA.[91] Others have suggested some sort of tax on SMS messaging. So far, none of these proposals have come to fruition. In January 2015, the AU announced yet another aspirational set of budget proposals. Specifically, it committed its member states to fund the AU operational budget at 100 per cent; its programme budget at 75 per cent; but only 25 per cent of its peace support operations budget, as these are issues of broader international concern and responsibility.[92]

In the meantime, the largest donations have come from the EU's African Peace Facility and bilateral deals, primarily with Western governments. This badly lopsided funding stream created a basic problem by undermining 'both African leadership of the capacity-building process and donor faith in those institutions'.[93] As Malan concluded, until this is done, 'African ownership' will continue to be a 'politically correct' but 'practically flawed' idea.[94] As the so-called Prodi Report on AU peace support operations concluded, 'In the final analysis, the AU will only be able to respond to crises effectively if there is sufficient political and financial commitment of its own members states and, more generally, of the international community.'[95]

The second persistent obstacle, which probably helps to explain the limited financial support invested by African governments, was the lack of substantive agreement on the purpose of these new institutions and what

they were supposed to do in response to particular crises. Despite many paper agreements, declarations and conventions, African international society remained badly divided over when and how foreign governments and the continent's organizations should get involved in other people's wars and political crises. This was reflected in heated debates over how Africans should respond to the conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia in particular, but also the non-discussion of conflicts such as those in the Niger Delta, between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and, for years, Boko Haram's insurgency in Nigeria. It was also fundamentally problematic to try and build effective early warning mechanisms when African governments were unwilling to allow regional organizations freely to collect the relevant information. Yet regimes in many of the countries at most risk of instability were reluctant to support such activities out of a concern that they might lead to unwanted forms of external interference. This led some analysts to conclude that many African governments still viewed the new APSA in largely instrumental terms as just the latest mechanism to extract assistance from foreigners and help preserve regime security.[96]

Notes

1 ‘Hopeless Africa’, *The Economist*, 13–19 May 2000, front cover and p. 15.

2 See, for example, the AU Constitutive Act (2000), the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (2004), and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007).

3 Malan, ‘Africa’, p. 90.

4 Cited ibid., p. 89.

5 See Mays, *Africa's First*.

6 See Muyangwa and Vogt, *An Assessment*.

7 Berman and Sams, ‘The peacekeeping potential’, p. 55.

8 Ibid., pp. 54–6; Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 89.

9 From 1 June 1993 to 31 March 2001, the Peace Fund received nearly US$41 million, roughly two-thirds of which came from non-African sources. Berman and Sams, ‘The peacekeeping potential’, p. 55.

10 Ibid., p. 54.

11 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 90.

12 Berman and Sams, ‘The peacekeeping potential’, p. 54.

13 Interview with AU Commission official, Addis Ababa, May 2007.

14 For an overview, see Adebajo, *Building Peace in West Africa*.

15 See van Walraven, *Dreams of Power*.

16 *Declaration on the Framework for an OAU Response to Unconstitutional Changes in Government*, OAU doc. AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), 10–12 July 2000. This drew upon the earlier decision on unconstitutional changes of government taken by the heads of state and government of the OAU at the Algiers Summit, 12–14 July 1999.

17 Figures compiled from McGowan, ‘African military coups’; Souaré, ‘The African Union’; and author's count since 2013.

18 The likely catalyst for the inclusion of this clause was the assassination of President Sylvanus Olympio of Togo in an army coup d’état in January 1963 as the OAU was being assembled.

19 McGowan, ‘African military coups’, p. 348.

20 Decisions adopted by the 66th Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, CM/Dec.330–363 (LXVI), Dec.356 (1997).

21 See UN Security Council Resolution 841 (1993) and subsequent resolutions on the situation in Haiti.

22 OAU doc. AHG/Decl.5 (XXXVI), July 2000.

23 For details, see, for example, Thyne and Powell, ‘Coup d’état’.

24 AU, *Draft Background Paper*, p. 20.

25 *Ezulwini Framework for the Enhancement of the Implementation of Measures of the African Union in Situations of Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa* (AU doc. PSC/PR/2(CCXIII), 27 January 2010).

26 See Engel, *Unconstitutional Changes* and Omorogbe, 'A club of incumbents?'

27 Dersso, 'The adequacy of the APSA' and author's interview with Dr Solomon Dersso, 5 June 2014.

28 See AU docs PSC/PR/COMM.(CCLX), 16 February 2011 and PSC/PR/BR.2(CCLXVIII), 23 March 2011.

29 AU doc. PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLXXXIV), 5 July 2013.

30 Souaré, 'The African Union', p.79.

31 Haggis, *The African Union*.

32 *Protocol on Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union*, adopted at Addis Ababa, 3 February 2003, at www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/Text/Protocol%20on%20Amendments%20to%20the%20Constitutive%20Act.pdf.

33 It shall enter into force thirty days after the deposit of instruments of ratification by a two-thirds majority of the AU member states.

34 The preamble to Article 4 (Principles) of the *PSC Protocol* explicitly states that the Council 'shall be guided by the principles enshrined in the … Charter of the United Nations'. In addition, the preparatory materials for the OAU Charter indicate that the organization was intended to be one of the 'regional arrangements' referred to in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. See Henrikson, 'The growth', pp. 130ff. For more details, see Williams, 'The Peace and Security Council', pp. 610–11.

35 AU, *Roadmap*, p. 5.

36 The only time it has been invoked is in support of the trial of the former President of Chad, Hissene Habre, on charges of political killings and torture of thousands of civilians between 1982 and 1990.

37 For a sympathetic overview of the AU's approach, see de Waal, ‘African roles’.

38 The AU's Operation Democracy in the Comoros (March 2008) was conducted with the consent of the *de jure* authorities and in the name of defending democracy rather than of civilian protection.

39 For the details, see AU doc. EX/CL/Dec.34 (III), Assembly/AU/Dec.22, 4–8 July 2003.

40 The portfolios are peace and security, political affairs, infrastructure and energy, social affairs, human resources, science and technology, trade and industry, rural economy and agriculture, and economic affairs.

41 Author's confidential interview.

42 Engel and Porto, ‘The African Union's’.

43 Makinda and Okumu, *The African Union*, p. 51.

44 Malan, ‘Africa’, p. 113.

45 Interviews with PSC officials, Addis Ababa, May 2007, May 2010.

46 This section draws upon Williams, ‘The Peace and Security Council’.

47 Article 2(1) of the *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*. This was signed in Durban on 9 July 2002 and came into force on 26 December 2003 (after ratification by twenty-seven of the fifty-three AU members). The PSC officially began its work on 16 March 2004, at the ministerial level, at the margins of the 4th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council.

48 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 97.

49 Ibid., p. 97.

50 Rwanda appears in ‘east Africa’ as the result of a formal change by the RPF government, while Burundi remains in ‘central Africa’.

51 See Sturman and Hayatou, ‘The Peace and Security Council’. The so-called Arria formula started in 1992, when the Venezuelan Permanent

Representative to the UN Security Council, Diego Arria, invited fellow members of the Security Council to meet away from the Council's chambers with independent experts on the Balkans.

52 The AU authorized the creation of the AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in 2003, before the PSC was formally established.

53 For overviews, see Dersso, *Annual Review 2012–2013* and *Annual Review 2013–2014*.

54 AU, *Draft Background Paper*, p. 1; see also p. 18.

55 See Murithi and Lulie, *The African Union*.

56 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 186.

57 Ibid., p. 187.

58 For an overview, see AU, *African Union Continental Early Warning System*.

59 *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union* (hereafter *PSC Protocol*), adopted Durban, South Africa, 9 July 2002, Article 12.2b.

60 Wane, ‘From concept’, p. 6.

61 In the first half of 2010 the CEWS began using a software system called the African Reporter, which provided templates for submitting incident and situation reports from AU field missions. By 2013 it had developed the African Prospectus, a tool to forecast risk propensity or vulnerability to various structural factors, and Live-Mon, a software package that geo-located news items for display on a map.

62 These missions and offices were not part of the CEWS but were set up for political reasons by the PSC, usually to monitor areas of ongoing conflict, such as Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Chad, Comoros, Sudan, Liberia, and Ethiopia–Eritrea. Most of them consisted of only a small number of personnel.

63 For details of the sub-regional mechanisms as of early 2008, see Franke, *Security Cooperation*, pp. 191–206.

64 *Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism*, signed by the IGAD heads of state and government, Khartoum, Sudan, January 2002. The protocol entered into force in July 2003 after ratification by Eritrea, Kenya, Ethiopia and Sudan.

65 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 210 n. 36.

66 These offices are in Cotonou (covering Benin, Nigeria and Togo), Ouagadougou (covering Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger), Monrovia (covering Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana) and Banjul (covering the Gambia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal).

67 This paragraph is based on the author's discussion with CEWS staff, Washington, DC, 2 July 2009.

68 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 153.

69 Malan, ‘Africa’, pp. 108–9. Each brigade was supposed to have a headquarters unit, four infantry battalions, an engineer battalion, a reconnaissance element, an aviation element, a communications element, a military police element, a forward logistics element, a medical element, military observers and a civil support element.

70 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, pp. 157–8.

71 Cilliers, *The African Standby Force*, p. 17.

72 Malan, ‘Africa’, pp. 109, 115.

73 AU, *Roadmap*.

74 One AU document stated: ‘Nothing precludes the ASF from deploying outside Africa, either as a contribution to a UN force or as a rapid reaction capability.’ AU, *Harmonized Doctrine*, chap. 5, para. 12c.

75 AU, *A Concept Paper*, para. 11.

76 *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Operationalisation of the Rapid Deployment Capability of the African Standby Force and*

the Establishment of an 'African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises' (AU doc. RPT/Exp/VI/STCDSS/(i-a)2013, 29–30 April 2013).

77 ACIRC supporters included Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Liberia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

78 Cilliers, *The African Standby Force*, p. 4.

79 For example, Marshall, *Building an Effective*, p. 7.

80 There are three obvious alternatives to such donor support. One is that the AU could use the existing lift assets from countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa and hope that these states will align their priorities with those of the AU. A second is that the AU could investigate hiring private contractors to provide airlift. NATO's Strategic Airlift Interim Solutions (SALIS) might be an option, but contractors are expensive, donors will probably continue to pay for strategic lift capabilities (at least for the foreseeable future) and this option will not build the AU's own capacities in the long term. A third option would be for the AU to start building its own airlift capability. Ibid, p. 15. See also Diop, Peyton and McConville, *Building Africa's Airlift Capacity*.

81 See Cilliers, *The African Standby Force*, pp. 6–7; Marshall, *Building an Effective*.

82 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 176.

83 Cilliers, *The African Standby Force*, p. 16.

84 Marshall, *Building an Effective*, p. 18.

85 See Williams and Dersso, *Saving Strangers*.

86 See Nathan, 'Mediation'.

87 Franke, *Security Cooperation*, pp. 144–5.

88 Interviews with AU and independent analysts, Addis Ababa, May 2010.

89 Aboagye, 'Global and regional'.

90 Engel, *The African Union Finances*, p. 24.

91 *The Report of The High-Level Panel on Alternative Sources of Funding the African Union* (AU doc. EA10423, July 2013). It estimated the hospitality levy could generate over $150m annually, while the flight tax could raise nearly $500m per year.

92 AU doc. Assembly/AU/Dec.559(XXIV), 30–31 January 2015.

93 Malan, ‘Africa’, p. 111.

94 Ibid., p. 116. With regard to the issue of ‘ownership’, it is notable that Western military officers acting as ‘advisors’ have been accused of ‘exerting considerable influence on the concepts, standards and decisions taken at every level. Only SADC has resisted such an infiltration.’ Cilliers, *The African Standby Force*, p. 18.

95 UN Security Council, *Report of the African Union–United Nations Panel*, para. 15.

96 See Herbst, ‘Crafting regional cooperation’ and Reno, ‘The regionalization’.

Chapter Nine
Peacemaking

A second international response to Africa's wars was peacemaking – that is, the process of engineering a negotiated settlement to end armed conflict. For the purposes of this chapter, it does not encompass the longer-term process of peace-building through which such agreements are implemented (some important dimensions of which are discussed in chapter 10). Clearly not all African conflicts witnessed serious peacemaking initiatives; many were simply left to fester. Overall, however, peacemaking initiatives were a much more common feature of the post-Cold War era than was previously the case. This was part of a general global trend which saw a rise in the number and proportion of armed conflicts being brought to an end – if only temporarily in some cases – via negotiated settlements.[1] In Africa, the UCDP identified 114 peace agreements involving 26 African states signed between 1990 and 2011.[2] The UN's Peacemaker website lists a further 45 African peace deals signed between 2012 and January 2015, some of which were ceasefires rather than political settlements and thirteen of which involved different aspects of Sudan–South Sudan relations.[3]

In the two decades after the Cold War, peacemaking in Africa assumed various guises. In part, this variation reflected the lack of reliable mediation formulas. As one of the world's most experienced international mediators lamented, there was no ‘road map on how [mediation] is to be conducted and there is still no official political doctrine upon which to rely’.[4] Nor was there any consensus on some fundamental questions about which parties to include in negotiations, which parties to welcome into transitional administrations, and how to engineer power-sharing within neopatrimonial regimes.[5] Perhaps most crucially of all, it was not always clear on whose terms peace should be built. Sometimes, as in Mozambique and Rwanda, the mediation process encouraged a liberalization of the country's political systems and social institutions, with built-in requirements for multiparty democracy. On other occasions, as in Angola, the brand of democracy sponsored by external actors was based on winner-take-all elections. Sometimes, especially after the establishment of the International Criminal

Court (ICC) in 2002, external parties emphasized various forms of retributive justice and war crimes trials in parallel with the mediation process. Hence, after 2004, conflict situations in Uganda, DRC, CAR, Sudan, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Libya and Mali were referred to the ICC by the host government, the UN Security Council or the Office of the ICC's Prosecutor. Most commonly, however, external mediators acted on the assumption that peace was most likely if all parties could plausibly claim they had won, or at least claim that they hadn't been defeated. In sum, peacemaking was often thought to require some form of power-sharing, at least for a transitional period until the country could determine its more permanent governance structures. In the UCDP dataset, 41 of the agreements in Africa between 1990 and 2011 involved some form of power-sharing arrangements; either extensive power-sharing in a new government (18 cases), or providing for rebel integration into an interim government (34 cases). Eleven agreements involved both.[6]

The upsurge in mediation did not always bring about the desired results. Although relative successes were recorded in Burundi (2000), Liberia (2003), Sudan (2005), Côte d'Ivoire (2007), Kenya (2008) and Mali (2015), there were also cases where mediation seemed to make already bad situations significantly worse, as in Angola (1992), Rwanda (1993), Sierra Leone (1999) and Darfur (2006). Worryingly, it was estimated that, if the implementation of the Bicesse Accords in Angola (1991) and the Arusha Accords in Rwanda (1993) had gone well, perhaps as many as 1.5 million people might not have died in the ensuing violence. In other words, the consequences of constructing the wrong kind of peace could be disastrous, reigniting violence, sometimes on a greater scale and intensity than before the peace process began. This led some critics to conclude that external parties should keep their noses out of other people's wars and instead ‘give war a chance’.[7] Others thought ‘external efforts to terminate internal warfare [in Africa] may be as much part of the problem as they are part of the solution’.[8] For others, the lesson for mediators to take away was not just to achieve ‘peace per se but the right kind of peace’.[9] Another perspective, articulated by Alex de Waal, argued that when it came to peacemaking, money talked. Consequently, the prospect for stable peace deals relied on the flow of funds in Africa's ‘political marketplace’.

This chapter addresses these issues by first providing an overview of the most common approach to external peacemaking, namely, the construction of power-sharing mechanisms. It then discusses an important alternative view put forward by Alex de Waal, who sees peacemaking as an enterprise driven by money that is shaped by the structures of Africa's ‘political marketplace’. The next section then summarizes some of the main obstacles to building the right kind of peace in Africa's war zones, specifically those resulting from the characteristics of the conflict environment and the nature of external, primarily Western-led attempts at peacemaking. The basic argument is that the power-sharing formula struggled to deal with parties that did not really want to share power and hence de Waal's framework forms a better starting point for thinking about how to devise peace settlements that work. Nevertheless, peacemaking should be conceptualized as an ongoing, usually painstakingly slow process of demilitarizing politics and that marketplace. This must entail building at least a minimal degree of trust between former adversaries, making a serious effort to reform the local security sector, and building justice systems that resonate with local and international standards.

Peacemaking as Power-Sharing

Writing in the late 1990s, Christopher Clapham argued that international peacemaking initiatives were increasingly influenced by a set of informal rules which assumed that almost all armed parties to the conflict should be accorded broadly equal standing and that the goal of the peacemaker was to seek a settlement acceptable to them all.[10] This deviated from what happened in the Cold War era, when governments were usually accorded a special status compared with other conflict parties. The other important difference was the stance of Western governments, which shifted from helping their allies win to ending those conflicts deemed to be sufficiently important as quickly as possible and at a minimal cost. These new rules of the mediation game created a situation where it often appeared that it was an armed faction's ability to cause havoc rather than the merits of its political agenda that determined whether it was granted a seat at the negotiation table – or whether, in some cases, it should be offered a place within the new government.

Clapham also identified three other important ingredients in this peacemaking toolkit. First, belligerents were expected to respect a ceasefire – the sooner the better. Second, the terms of the peace agreement were to be built into the process of external mediation, usually via three mechanisms: agreement on a new constitutional structure; agreement that a transitional period would be shepherded by some form of broad-based government of national unity; and agreement that elections would decide the nature of the government after the transitional period had ended.[11] Third, external parties would act as custodians of the process, usually by offering some kind of international peacekeeping force.

Clapham argued that, in the case of Rwanda's civil war (1990–4), this peacemaking recipe not only failed to avert genocide but actually helped create the conditions that made it possible. In particular, the Arusha Accords (1993) provided extremist groups with the ammunition they needed to label the moderate Hutu parties as traitors.[12] In part because of the lack of external security guarantees, the Accords also failed to stop preparations by all parties for a continuance of the civil war and the extremists' preparations for genocide (see chapter 6). The result was that many more Rwandans died after the peace process collapsed than in the years of civil war that preceded it.

Put crudely, the approach outlined by Clapham can be summarized as a power-sharing model of peacemaking.[13] This often drew upon a popularized interpretation of Arend Lijphart's more precise notion of consociationalism – a system of governance based on elite cooperation which embodied three core ideas: significant group autonomy, proportionality as the basic standard of political representation, and minority veto powers.[14] As noted above, between 1990 and 2011 there were forty-one peace agreements that included power-sharing provisions, usually in relation to the political and/or military dimensions of governance. Although the intensification of the US-led 'war on terrorism' in Africa after late 2001 diminished the appeal of this peacemaking formula in some cases, by encouraging governments not to negotiate with dissidents whom they considered 'terrorists', it was employed in enough cases to be considered the orthodox approach.[15]

The essence of the power-sharing idea is that ‘[i]ncorporation rather than exclusion is seen as the key to conflict resolution’.[16] It would therefore seem plausible that this approach should work well in cases where exclusion was part of the underlying reasons for war.[17] These power-sharing agreements were supported for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, they were sold as the best way to manage conflict because it was assumed that, the more power-sharing was built into peace agreements, the less effort international custodians would need to invest to guarantee them.[18] At other times, they were championed as being better than the alternatives on offer, such as the winner-takes-all elections which led to the resumption of war in Angola in 1992. Power-sharing ‘pacts’ were also sometimes justified as ‘the only attainable short-term goal compatible with long-term democratization’.[19] Other commentators worried that, although the concept of power-sharing was sound, its ‘central weakness’ was that ‘it runs into so many obstacles when put into practice’.[20]

The theory behind power-sharing agreements was that they encouraged moderate and cooperative behaviour because all parties could see the benefits of being able to participate in the governance of the territory concerned. In principle at least, they were also compatible with the West's newly found interest in promoting liberal democracy, although in practice they often tended to support regimes founded upon (ethnic) group rights rather than individual rights. Thus mediators tasked with ending protracted conflicts in which no side was able to achieve a decisive military victory often saw power-sharing as a potential way out.[21] Although by no means perfect, efforts to end Burundi's long-running civil war were defended as one of the more effective practical examples of power-sharing in contemporary Africa.[22] Specifically, the Arusha Accords (August 2000) were said to have ‘successfully brought to a close one of the longest civil wars in the Great Lakes region’.[23] Moreover, if ‘the Burundi experiment holds any promise, this is in large part because of the carefully calibrated distribution of ethnic identities and party affiliations in the government, the National Assembly, the Senate, the communal councils, and, most importantly, the army’ (see chapter 6).[24]

Despite their popularity with international mediators, power-sharing agreements attracted three main lines of criticism: they rarely produced

stable peace, they were simultaneously too inclusive and too exclusionary, and they rested on morally dubious assumptions that incentivized violence both within the war zone in question and beyond.

Ineffective?

Power-sharing was frequently criticized on the grounds that it failed to produce stable peace consistently. Andreas Mehler, for example, argued that 'It is doubtful whether the power-sharing ingredients of peace agreements are conducive to peace.'[25] This line of thinking drew, in part, on the idea that so-called civil wars which ended via negotiated settlements might relapse into violence within five years.[26] Certainly, many of Africa's state-based armed conflicts experienced renewed violence after the signing of a power-sharing accord.

The two major doubts about the effectiveness of power-sharing deals concerned their timing and their lack of transformative capacity. In relation to timing, part of the problem was that these agreements (indeed, any agreements) were unlikely to succeed unless they occurred during what William Zartman called 'ripe moments' – that is, when the conflict reached a stage where all significant parties felt they were stuck in a mutually hurting stalemate, had valid spokespeople, and could see a way out.[27] If they were concocted at other times, the parties were likely to view agreements as little more than a temporary lull in the fighting in which to rearm and reorganize until they felt able to return to violent means of achieving their goals. In addition, power-sharing negotiations allowed some political elites to engage in numerous rounds of talks when perhaps their participation was only for the sake of material benefits – a charge frequently levelled against a wide range of actors in Somalia, DRC and Sudan. The tendency for agreements to be concluded at 'unripe' moments was usually put down to the idea that mediators were sometimes more interested in getting an agreement signed than in ensuring the durability of the peace that was supposed to follow.[28]

In terms of transformative capacity, the worry here was that agreements struggled to change the incentives and hence the behaviour of conflict parties. Specifically, power-sharing agreements usually assumed that former enemies would become partners despite the fact that none of them had

suffered military defeat. This was a big assumption. Writing of the power-sharing agreements in Liberia (1996) and Sierra Leone (1999), Liberia's former interim president, Amos Sawyer, noted that the resulting governments were ‘substantially, if not totally, controlled by armed groups whose leaders could hardly find in such arrangements sufficient incentive to blunt their greed and ambition’.[29] The ongoing civil war in South Sudan since December 2013 has seen similar dynamics at work. As discussed in chapter 3 and further below, it was particularly unclear how power-sharing pacts could work well within neopatrimonial systems.

Cooperation was especially important within the military sector where former enemies would need to be integrated into some sort of new, ‘national’ security force.[30] In practice, however, this often proved to be a major stumbling block of peace processes. The problems were exemplified by the protracted (and so far unsuccessful) efforts to create an effective and integrated national army in the DRC through the processes of *mixage* and *brassage*.[31] Because power-sharing agreements tended to be elite pacts, this approach also assumed that leaders at the top of their respective organizations were able to morph into effective bureaucratic cogs in the larger institutional machinery of the new regime, and hence its patronage networks. It also presumed that subordinates would continue to follow orders from those higher up the official chain of command. In practice, both these assumptions frequently proved to be faulty. Without effective guarantees (probably requiring some type of coercive instruments) and incentives, paper agreements were unlikely to change the zero-sum attitudes towards political power held by many African elites. Power-sharing agreements were thus likely to fail in situations where some actors felt they retained the possibility of achieving total power, or at least of significantly altering the existing military balance of power. This led critics to argue that a peace between warlords, if it endured at all, was likely to be only temporary.[32]

One important variable in the power-sharing process was the presence of effective external custodians who could try and provide guarantees – through funds, diplomatic pressure or peacekeepers – to help keep the implementation of an agreement on track.[33] One good example was the significant South African effort put into shepherding Burundi's peace process through to fruition.[34] Unfortunately, Western states were often

reluctant to put sufficient resources into African peace deals because of the continent's low strategic priority in their foreign policies (the partial exception was France's approach to some of its former colonies).

Using the Rwandan case once again, a good example was the relative neglect of the security provisions set out in the Arusha Accords (1993), which were put together with considerable international involvement. The implementation of the Accords was supposed to be assisted by the presence of a Neutral International Force (NIF), which, among other things, was mandated to:

- help provide security throughout the country, for humanitarian assistance, and for the expatriate community;
- monitor the ceasefire agreement, including the establishment and maintenance of a demilitarized zone around Kigali;
- investigate all reported infractions of the ceasefire agreement;
- help maintain public security by monitoring the activities of the gendarmerie and police; and
- assist with the demobilization and integration of the armed forces (expected to take seven to nine months and involve 50,000 government and RPF personnel).

In reality, however, the NIF was never established. In its place, the world's governments provided only a small and under-resourced UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMIR, which had only 2,500 troops, was largely confined to the capital city and its environs, and was ordered not to investigate the potential rearming of militia in Kigali as it became evident the Accords were unravelling.[35] This meant that, when the extremists carried out their coup in April 1994, there was nothing of military substance to stop the subsequent genocide.

Too inclusive and too exclusionary?[36]

Power-sharing agreements were also criticized for being simultaneously too inclusive and too exclusionary. They were too exclusionary in the sense that they offered ordinary citizens too little in terms of both participation in the

process and a say in the final terms of the political settlement. The problem here was that power-sharing agreements were usually elite pacts negotiated between leaders of armed factions, without broad-based participation by the country's citizens. It was thus common for unarmed groups within civil society to be ignored altogether or to participate only at the margins of the peace process. Women's associations were the least likely of all to be taken seriously.[37] This was in spite of growing evidence that showed that when women's groups were able to influence a peace process, not only was a deal more likely, but it was more likely to be implemented.[38] Civilian groups were thus said to lose out not only because of the war but because of the way in which peace was negotiated: from outside and from above.[39]

On the other hand, power-sharing agreements were also derided for their inclusivity when it came to armed factions. Critics argued this approach rewarded actors who resorted to violence and provided an incentive structure which encouraged rebel factions to splinter. Ian Spears dubbed this the ‘power-sharing trap’ where ‘efforts to include and accommodate everybody in itself generated increasing factionalism and – intentionally or unintentionally – left some complaining that they had been excluded.’[40] Notable examples of such splintering during peace processes are the conflicts in Somalia after 1995, in Darfur after late 2005, and in Mali after 2013.

Since post-Cold War Africa was awash with small arms and light weapons and, as discussed in chapter 3, it only took small bands of people to start an insurgency in weak states, it was relatively easy for armed gangs to gain a seat at the negotiation table. The flip side, of course, was that mediators could ignore potentially far more representative unarmed groups without any immediate and costly repercussions because these unarmed groups did not have the capacity to wreck the peace process. The upshot was that the power-sharing route to peacemaking generally left armed groups over-represented in any new dispensation.

Critics thus derided power-sharing agreements for providing a political pay-off to rebels that had failed to achieve victory on the battlefield. While some saw this as a realistic and pragmatic approach to mediation, others saw it as a form of appeasement.[41] The pay-off usually came in the form of inviting the rebels to enter the regime's neopatrimonial tent: while the leaders got

jobs in the new government, the rank and file were supposed to accrue benefits through subsequent DDR or SSR programmes.

One particularly controversial and ultimately unsuccessful example was the Lomé Accord of July 1999, which was intended to end Sierra Leone's civil war (see also chapter 3). After the capital city, Freetown, had been ransacked in January 1999 by a combination of the RUF and West Side Boys rebels and disgruntled government forces operating under the label of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, much international pressure, especially from the US and the UK, was put on the democratically elected regime of President Kabbah to extend the hand of peace to the RUF. In addition to providing seven ministerial posts for members of the RUF and making their leader, Foday Sankoh, vice-president and putting him in charge of a new commission for mineral resources, the Accord granted amnesty to all parties for violations committed during the war. In several respects, the Lomé Accord was the worst of all possible worlds: it did not go down well with the local population; it was not taken seriously by the RUF and its external supporters; and it did not persuade powerful international actors to provide the necessary security guarantees to ensure its implementation.

Not surprisingly, the Accord quickly collapsed. According to David Keen, there were five entirely predictable reasons why this happened: the continued destabilizing influence of the Liberian president, Charles Taylor; obstructionism by the RUF leadership; the exclusion of the Sierra Leone armed forces from the agreement; the weakness of international support for the DDR process; and the weak international peacekeeping effort.[42] As it turned out, the war was finally brought to an end after a change in fortunes on the battlefield: this occurred with the operations conducted by Guinean troops, a revamped UN peacekeeping force, and after the British Army dealt a decisive military blow to the West Side Boys in September 2000. Faced with superior military power, the rebels crumbled, and there was thus no longer any need to pander to their demands, offer them automatic government posts or honour Lomé's amnesty provisions. Instead, the rebels were given a chance to morph into political parties and win the support of the people at the ballot box – something most of them failed to do.[43] In terms of the wider lessons of peacemaking, this episode lends significant

weight to Tull and Mehler's conclusion that ‘it is imperative to think beyond violence as the primary measure of political inclusion’.[44]

Incentivizing violence?

A third strand of criticism argued that the power-sharing approach was morally dubious because it incentivized rebellion elsewhere: providing rebels with a share of power even when they were unable to defeat an incumbent regime created an incentive structure that would encourage other rebel leaders to see taking up arms as an effective route into government. In Tull and Mehler's words, ‘irrespective of their effectiveness in any given case, power-sharing agreements contribute to the reproduction of insurgent violence’.[45] This was primarily because these agreements levelled ‘the political playing-field in favour of insurgents at the expense of state leaders’.[46] The problem was that, if these armed actors proved to be what Stephen Stedman called greedy spoilers – actors willing to use force to achieve their goals, which expanded or contracted based on calculations of risk and benefit – then providing them with inducements in the form of government jobs or rewards for disarmament was likely simply to whet their appetites.[47] Ironically, therefore, critics argued that, rather than doing no harm, this formula for conflict resolution may have undermined the prospects for conflict prevention more generally.[48]

Assessing this line of critique is difficult because it is hard to know what motivates rebel groups and their willing recruits to take up arms: what might look to one analyst like a cynical and greedy attempt to gain a slice of the political action might look to others like a desperate but legitimate attempt to achieve greater self-determination for a particular people. Moreover, people's motives change as circumstances alter, so even if we understand motives at any given point in time, this may not remain true for long. The other point is that the current international norm of non-intervention already incentivizes violence, but of the kind that governments can wield against rebels and would-be rebels. In this sense, both the traditional approaches which privilege the sovereign regime and the power-sharing approach which provides more scope for rebels incentivize violence, but they incentivize different types. Whether there is an appropriate middle ground remains up for debate.

Peacemaking in Africa's ‘Political Marketplace’

The limits of the power-sharing approach have intensified the need to find alternative ways to make peace. Extrapolating from his observations of how politics works in the Horn of Africa, Alex de Waal has developed the most significant alternative way of thinking about peacemaking. It was stimulated by de Waal's observation that while greater ‘effort than ever is invested in peacemaking, and agreements are more elaborate than ever before … they seem not to bring peace’.[49]

At the heart of de Waal's alternative framework is the idea that high politics in the Horn (and by implication some other regions in Africa and beyond) revolves around money, guns and patronage. These are the constitutive elements of what he calls ‘the business of power’.[50] Like other businesses, this one takes place in a ‘political marketplace’ that is structured by a particular set of rules and material incentives. Crucially for this chapter, de Waal points out that all attempts at peacemaking (and peacekeeping) take place in the same marketplace and are hence subjected to the same pressures.

De Waal's concept of the ‘political marketplace’ builds on existing ideas in the literature on African politics, especially those related to kleptocracy, neopatrimonialism, and warlord politics. He sees material factors (especially the search for resources) as the real driver of African politics, not cultural factors such as ethnicity, kinship or religion.[51] In this marketplace, political elites become business managers; ordinary people become commodities. As de Waal puts it,

> The political marketplace is a highly materialist, instrumental framework that provides little space for ideals and norms. It reduces people to commodities. People, of course, resist. People attempt to regulate the political marketplace (usually drawing upon culturally-legitimated systems), to control it (using coercion), to sabotage or evade its impacts, and to transform politics into a democratic system.[52]

The political marketplace in Africa is shaped along four dimensions, each of which has consequences for peacemakers.[53] First, to what extent is

political life regulated by formal and institutional rules and procedures as opposed to inter-personal transactions and relationships? For de Waal, the main transaction is ‘the exchange of loyalty over a period of time, or cooperation in a task, for resources. This exchange is usually monetary, creating a marketplace of loyalties.’ In this system, political actors rarely trust one another and they certainly do not trust the rule of law. They can, however, generally predict how other actors will behave in response to economic incentives.

Second, the marketplace is shaped by how much political finance is derived externally from rents as opposed to being manufactured by domestic sources. In most countries in the Horn of Africa, business profits are obtained primarily through rents, ‘either directly (government contracting and investment in minerals) or indirectly (obtaining a profitable position in a market for services, or securing key assets at a discount, courtesy of governmental sponsorship)’. Political rulers in such a system will also draw on external sources of finance, including security assistance packages from global powers, foreign aid and profits from transnational organized crime.

The third dimension is the extent to which control over the means of organizing violence is concentrated in the hands of the ruler or distributed across a broader political elite. ‘In no case’, de Waal notes, ‘does the ruler exercise a monopoly on the legitimate use of force.’ A key instrument – sometimes the only instrument – for keeping those intermediate elites in line is thus ‘financial patronage’. Entrepreneurs of violence might be official members of the national security services or heads of paramilitary forces. But some might be outside such institutions; rebel commanders or tribal chiefs, for instance. Insiders and outsiders need to be dealt with differently when it comes to allocating the political budget. Starting a rebellion or a mutiny is thus a way to attract attention and signal resolve before a round of bargaining takes place. Bargains are struck after a mixture of ‘violence and talking’. They represent what de Waal terms a ‘payroll peace’ wherein the rebel leader is promoted and his fighters put (back) on the army payroll.[54]

Finally, it matters how much a country's national political marketplace is regionally and internationally integrated. Crucially, political rulers need to be able to regulate new entrants to the marketplace. Sometimes this means being able to limit ‘foreign sponsorship of new domestic players’. Political

rulers in weak states are therefore at a severe disadvantage because external powers can penetrate the national market and influence the price of loyalty. Somalia is one example that has suffered from regional interference since the late 1970s and hence cannot find a viable internal settlement irrespective of whether the price of loyalty is high or low. Furthermore, national political markets are also increasingly penetrated by global forces, including Western states whose security assistance programmes look to combat particular local threats when they do not intervene directly. For de Waal, these global entanglements 'only serve to finance the rentierism, increase the price of loyalty, and thereby increase the turbulence of these countries, creating a vicious cycle whereby threats are sustained and further threats are generated'.

Peacemaking initiatives are also subjected to these factors. Would-be peacemakers should therefore recognize the type of political environment they are operating in and design their activities accordingly. If de Waal is correct, the main incentive to make peace (and hence wage war) is money. Rebellions and mutinies are effectively a form of rent-seeking to deliver better deals for their leaders (who in theory should dispense some of the cash to 'their' people). In de Waal's words, 'The logic of a rent-seeking rebellion is that the insurgent stakes a claim by attacking a government asset. The government, before opening negotiations, responds with a counter-attack on the rebels' asset base – the population – to convey its seriousness. This may continue for several rounds until a bargain is reached.'[55] The government decides how much money it is prepared to offer to buy the rebels' compliance. This is what de Waal calls the 'auction of loyalties'. As noted above, the deal will usually involve promoting the chief mutineer and putting his troops (back) on the army payroll. Some form of inter-tribal conference will help to legitimize the deal and grant status to the local chiefs.

De Waal's scheme makes an important distinction between 'formal negotiation' (which takes place in conference halls and is generally just window-dressing for the benefit of foreigners) and 'real bargaining' (which takes place in the corridors, car parks and private rooms after 'formal negotiations' have finished). Peace deals in the political marketplace are the outcome of 'real bargaining' and this involves haggling over the amount of the pay-off not the minutiae of cabinets, political structures or security

sector reform. Shrewd governments try to engage the rebels one by one and make discrete offers. For some weaker rebels, access to the formal negotiations is prized because it brings per diems and a seat at the internationally sponsored mediation table, which, in turn, provides opportunities for greater networking.

Once a deal is struck, the next issue is whether it will endure. Unfortunately, the logic of the system dictates that agreements are constantly up for renegotiation. Peace negotiations thus become an instrument used by political elites on all sides to better position themselves for the next round of fighting. 'A peace agreement in the political marketplace', de Waal concludes,

> is as good as the political conditions under which it was signed: as soon as those conditions change, it will be renegotiated. The foundation of a lasting agreement is that the leaders of the belligerent parties come out of the negotiations with more resources than they entered. Such deals require expanding budgets, and will fail when that budgetary expansion stalls. Alternatively, a peace deal is a security pact in which signatories join forces to eliminate their rivals, which allows existing rents to be reallocated in favour of the former. Either way, it is likely to be an 'inter-war' rather than a peace.[56]

Foreign peacemakers and peacekeepers that enter into this political marketplace should be aware of its dynamics. They should probably also lower their expectations of what can be achieved. If the logic of the system is immune to individual peacemaking initiatives, then the best that can be hoped for is some sort of equilibrium among the key players, where violence is pervasive but limited rather than pervasive and extreme.

Building the Right Kind of Peace: Key Challenges

Rather than focus on achieving an agreement to share power between the major belligerents, building the 'right kind of peace' involves the much more difficult and long-term task of constructing structures and mechanisms that do not institutionalize violence, corruption and impunity. In the short term this will almost certainly involve concluding an effective

peace agreement, but this is merely the start of a long and complicated process that ultimately requires the demilitarization of the country's politics and changing some of the central elements of de Waal's political marketplace. With regard to the agreement itself, a central problem facing all mediators is that, in the absence of an overwhelming external security force, any agreement will have to accommodate the existing, often severe, power inequalities within the conflict zone in question. And, if those inequalities are challenged too drastically, some kind of backlash against the agreement is likely.[57] This is why some analysts have highlighted the potentially crucial importance of external custodians.[58]

But, as Terrence Lyons has pointed out, getting a peace agreement is only part of the battle, because agreements alone do not automatically create stable peace. Rather, they create new opportunities – what Lyons described as 'the starting point for another series of negotiations, bargaining, and institution-building rather than a blueprint that must be constructed'.[59] In this view, 'peace' is best conceptualized not as what occurs after the signing of an agreement – which could be seen as post-settlement politics – but as an ongoing series of bargains between the key players which demilitarizes politics and institutions that sustained the war. Mediators and peace-builders can encourage this process either through the marginalization of certain combatants (which will probably require some coercive 'sticks') or by the transformation of the belligerent parties so that they no longer see it as legitimate to use military force to achieve their objectives (which will probably require some 'carrots'). In the short term this will necessarily involve some way of accommodating the demands made by armed groups, but over the longer term it must involve serious efforts to reform the security sector and empower the unarmed majority so that their voices may also be heard.

The remainder of this section identifies two principal clusters of challenges to this process. The first relates to issues posed by the nature of Africa's recent conflict environments. The second revolves around issues related to the would-be peacemakers.

Challenges posed by African conflict environments

As discussed in chapter 2, Africa's wars usually involved multiple armed factions, and the multiplication of such groups was facilitated by pressures within both governments and their opponents. On the government side, troops frequently deserted or went rogue (e.g. AFRC in Sierra Leone, the FARDC in the DRC, the SPLA in South Sudan, and the SNA in Somalia), while rebel leaders often struggled to stop their subordinates from creating splinter factions (e.g. as happened to the NPFL in Liberia, the SPLM in Sudan and the SLA in Darfur). The resulting melange of fighters added to the complexity of conflict dynamics and presented would-be peacemakers with a formidable set of headaches. These were magnified when some or all of the belligerent parties resembled what Michael Doyle called ‘incoherent factions’, wherein individual members were unprofessional and often failed to follow orders in the official chain of command.[60] Doyle concluded that, where multiple incoherent factions remained hostile towards one another, the chances of implementing a peace deal were incredibly small.[61] A further complication was that some of these factions had little support from the local population they claimed to represent. In these circumstances, even when an agreement was signed between the leaders of such factions, their lack of popular representation reduced the likelihood that the mass of ordinary people would consider the agreement legitimate. In conflicts involving incoherent and unrepresentative factions it was also likely that these groups would view continued warfare as an important source of their livelihood; and, when war became a business, peace would inevitably mean unemployment or at least a drop in profits and brand recognition.

A second challenge stemmed from the political context in which these factions frequently operated. As described above, Alex de Waal's concept of the ‘political marketplace’ captured some of the key characteristics of this environment, notably the series of ‘auctions’ wherein political loyalty was traded among the different factions. In an earlier work, de Waal had argued that to prevent the market from collapsing completely, peacemakers had two options: support buy-in or equilibrium. In the former scenario, ‘the most powerful purchaser of loyalty (typically the national government) puts sufficient resources on the table to enable all elites to take a share’. In the latter, different centres of patronage are left ‘controlling comparable levels of resources and able to match and deter one another’. De Waal concluded

that mediated agreements would work ‘only if the formal negotiations over constitutional provisions and power-sharing take place in support of a patrimonial buy-in’. The problem this presented was that any such buy-in effectively gave the recognized parties a licence for corruption and might reduce the chances of bringing war criminals to justice. This approach also remained focused on those armed factions that currently wielded power and offered few prospects for empowering non-armed but potentially more representative groups. Finally, the bargain was ‘only good for as long as the marketplace remains relatively stable’.[62]

A third complication for peacemakers was the fact that many of Africa's wars were messy and inconclusive. As a result, so were their endings. Situations where there were no clear winners – and, indeed, where winning in the traditional sense was not always the primary concern of the belligerents[63] – left peacemakers with a difficult set of challenges. For one thing, it left them facing governments that felt little need to offer concessions to insurgents and with rebel factions that were trying to win at the negotiating table what they had failed to win on the battlefield. Of course, most conflict parties tended to fight and talk simultaneously, but their talk often reflected the military balance of power at the time.[64]

This sort of problem was clearly evident in the wars in Sudan. The fact that a peace deal was concluded between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A in January 2005 was at least partly due to the fact that the rebels had proved themselves capable of inflicting sustained military damage upon the government, especially in the south of the country. In contrast, part of the reason why the talks to end the war in Darfur repeatedly collapsed was because the rebels were unable to gain the upper hand militarily across the region for a sustained period of time.[65]

A fourth problem was the sheer scale of the tasks facing would-be peacemakers. In many cases the general level of underdevelopment, the collapse of effective state institutions and the destruction of infrastructure required nothing less than a huge injection of resources. This left peacemakers with a big problem as far as delivery was concerned: how could settlements stick if people continued to lack jobs as well as access to schools, hospitals and basic infrastructure? Once again, events in Sudan provide a sobering example. Although the so-called Comprehensive Peace

Agreement (2005) was undoubtedly a significant diplomatic breakthrough, implementation of its many parts – including crucial strategic issues concerning the functioning of the Government of National Unity, the referendum on southern secession and wealth-sharing – assumed a level of basic administrative and social infrastructure that was lacking in most of southern Sudan. A similar story was evident eight years after the conclusion of Sierra Leone's civil war. In spite of the presence of a large UN peacekeeping operation, a follow-up peace-building mission and significant amounts of assistance from the UK, Sierra Leone continued to languish at the very bottom of the UN Development Programme's Human Development Index.[66] By 2014 it was still only 183rd out of the 187 states listed. This led some observers to ask whether the ingredients of its original war recipe were starting to reappear under the noses of the UN and other peace-builders.[67]

Yet as significant as these challenges were, they were all arguably symptoms of a more fundamental problem: the militarization of politics.[68] Hence peacemakers need to figure out how to demilitarize the institutions which sustained the war, because the more demilitarized a society becomes, the greater the chance of a successful transition from war to stable peace. If wartime institutions remain unreconstructed, peace agreements followed by elections may end wars – at least for a time – but they are unlikely to mark the transition to genuine democratic politics within which peace can become sustainable. For Terrence Lyons, the solution lay in three areas: building effective interim administrations – because transitioning territories still require government; transforming militarized organizations – regimes, insurgents and paramilitaries – into effective political parties;[69] and demobilizing combatants and engaging in security sector reform that can sustain democracy.[70] Although each conflict generates its own requirements, this is a sensible way to conceptualize the process and the primary issues.

Challenges relating to external mediators

A further set of challenges arose from the characteristics of the external mediation initiatives that tried to resolve Africa's wars. The first was attracting the right type of mediators – i.e. those that avoided what Lakhdar Brahimi and Salman Ahmed described as the ‘seven deadly sins’ of

peacemaking.[71] Ignorance of the political dynamics and the causes of the conflict was the first sin. Unfortunately, they noted, ‘ignorance-based decision-making … is the norm rather than the exception in post-conflict environments’. The second sin was arrogance. This often manifested in the failure to ask for help and the tendency to rely on the wrong people – often those locals who spoke the best English – when questions were asked. Arrogance was also apparent when mediators assumed that the current conflict was ‘just like country X’ – with X usually being one of their previous assignments. The third sin, partiality, was best avoided by mediators working hard to establish their credentials as honest brokers *before* they needed to deliver tough messages to the warring parties. Impotence, the fourth sin, usually stemmed from the mediators’ inability to maintain strong relations with key external stakeholders, without which their leverage was likely to be minimal. Haste was the fifth sin. As Brahimi and Ahmed concluded, ‘The best way to kill a potentially viable political solution is to float it prematurely.’ Inflexibility was also a major problem, especially when it prevented peacemakers from coping with unforeseen developments. Surprises always occurred, but the mediators usually had some say in whether they created new opportunities or new obstacles to be overcome. The seventh sin of mediation was to make false promises. In particular, parties needed to be told that compromises would be essential. And, since political and technical problems would always arise, mediators must effectively manage expectations about the role of insiders and outsiders.

Judged against this list, most external peacemakers in Africa did not score particularly highly. Rarely were they real experts in the history and politics of the conflict zone in question. Sometimes they were relatively low-level officials in their country's government machine, and when diplomatic big-hitters did engage, they were often parachuted into the fray relatively late in the day, without sufficient institutional support, and with unrealistic deadlines with which to operate. The brief appearances in the Darfur peace negotiations made by the US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick and the UK's Secretary for International Development Hilary Benn are perfect examples of this type of parachute diplomacy.

A common outcome was that, for a variety of reasons, external peacemakers often lacked significant leverage over the conflict parties. First, some

peacemakers were forced to operate without the united backing of the UN Security Council or other important players in the relevant region. Without a coherent approach to peacemaking in the Council or other relevant international organizations, diplomatic leverage was hard to generate. Second, for most of Africa's conflict parties, local political issues were of greater immediate importance than the decisions taken by the so-called international community. This position was reinforced by the widespread impression that external peacemakers usually lacked staying power. As one of General Paul Kagame's advisers observed in relation to the war in the DRC, ‘The insistence on the signing of an agreement and not on its contents is definitely symptomatic of an impatient world that wants to run away from the problem rather than solve it.’[72] In such circumstances, locals were sometimes content to try and wait out the foreigners whom they suspected would not be around in significant numbers forever. At best, an agreement might ensue, but it was always highly unlikely to represent a realistic roadmap to stable peace. This was certainly the case with the Lusaka agreement of July 1999, which was supposed to pave the way for ending the DRC war. Not only did it ignore several of the key conflict parties, its contents amounted to what one respected observer called ‘an international community wish list’.[73] Not surprisingly, the agreement failed to stop what would become one of Africa's biggest wars. As *The Economist* put it, ‘The war is dead, long live the war.’[74]

The main explanation for these relatively feeble efforts was Africa's diminished strategic importance after the Cold War. Compared to the relatively high political stakes associated with warding off communism, in the post-Cold War period Western governments were usually called on to ‘do something’ about Africa's wars only by specialist associations and charities within their own domestic populations. Without an obvious strategic rationale, Western governments were deeply reluctant to invest significant amounts of human and financial resources to resolve Africa's wars. The result was a form of low-intensity peacemaking where the resources were limited and initiatives often lacked political stamina. Indeed, some of them appeared designed more to satisfy the concerns of domestic audiences that something was being done rather than actually fixing the problems in the conflict zone. This stacked the odds against successful peacemaking from the start, because the clearest conclusion from the

general literature on the subject was that ‘mediating an intractable conflict requires a large commitment of time, energy, and other resources’.[75] In this context, international guarantees, if they came at all, were rarely credible on the ground.

Although Africa started to receive more (negative) attention after the US declared its ‘war on terrorism’ in response to the 9/11 attacks of September 2001, the increased levels of security assistance doled out to select African regimes did not translate into a greater use of Washington's political muscle to broker peace agreements. It is notable that during the fourteen years since 9/11, the Bush and Obama administrations played a leading role in securing only one major peace deal in Africa: the CPA in Sudan in 2005.

In addition, it is important to recall that, when external mediators did appear in Africa's war zones, it was unwise to assume that promoting stable peace was always their first priority. As Crocker and his colleagues observed, this depended ‘on the terms and implications of the settlement’. Sometimes, for example, external parties preferred not to see a friend or an ally make a significant concession during negotiations or judged that other bilateral interests with one of the conflict parties should take precedence over the need to reach a negotiated settlement.[76] And, with mediators such as Muammar Gaddafi, Omar Bongo and Idriss Déby, for example, these dangers were real.

A further challenge, strategic coordination, occurred in the relatively small proportion of African conflicts that attracted multiple external peacemaking initiatives simultaneously. These tended to be conflicts that generated activists and/or diaspora groups which made significant political noises in Western capitals. Although this was indicative of genuine interest in a conflict, ‘having multiple high-level mediators and several international organizations with a large operational presence on the ground can create confusion about who is in charge of the political role’.[77] In particular, the proliferation of special envoys and multiple mediators increased the likelihood of generating three significant problems: belligerents receiving mixed messages about the role of external actors; belligerents having an opportunity to go ‘forum shopping’, especially when discord over how to proceed was evident among the mediators; and mediators being able to pass

the buck to the others when it came to apportioning responsibility for failure.[78]

Conclusion

In post-Cold War Africa, the assumption that the route to peacemaking lies through power-sharing was challenged on several counts, including that such agreements frequently failed to produce stable peace, paid inadequate attention to the mass of unarmed people trapped in Africa's conflict zones, and incentivized violence both in the conflict zone and beyond. But, while power-sharing clearly had its limitations, there was no simple or quick way to end Africa's wars. This was especially true if Alex de Waal's analysis was correct about how the business of power in Africa's political marketplace would also tend to sustain militarism, violence and the commodification of the lives of ordinary Africans caught up in the ‘auction of loyalties’.

The task was made more difficult by both the characteristics of Africa's conflict environments and the type of peacemaking that was on offer. While the former frequently produced stubborn neopatrimonial regimes and a multitude of incoherent factions – some of which saw war as their best opportunity to make a living – the latter was heavily influenced by the West's lack of strategic interests on the continent. Even when these increased somewhat after 9/11, they did not necessarily lead to a greater emphasis on peacemaking. When mediation was attempted, it was often done on the cheap and without sustained political support at the highest levels. On the rare occasions there was a proliferation of mediators, strategic coordination between them was usually notable only for its absence.

In the short term, the key issue for peacemakers is to persuade the warring factions to stop using military force. This was more likely if external custodians have at their disposal both credible sticks and tasty carrots.[79] In the longer term, however, the route to stable peace lies in the demilitarization of politics and the marginalization of groups that seek power through violence. In de Waal's terms, it would require a complete change of the market's rules, which is almost impossible. As chapters 3 and 5 discussed, this does not mean it is only the rebel side of the equation that needs attention: governments also need to be encouraged to work harder to

provide marginalized groups with channels through which they can participate meaningfully in the country's politics. Following Lyons, peacemaking should be understood not as the search for an agreement but as an ongoing process of bargaining in which the long-term goal should be the demilitarization of the actors and institutions that sustained the war. The problem, of course, is how to stimulate and control such a process.

Although no one has all the answers, it is clear that for actors to lay down their arms permanently there needs to be a reasonable measure of trust and justice – both of which must lie at the core of future research agendas in this area. More effort must go into thinking how to build trust between individuals and groups at both the elite and the societal level.[80] With respect to justice, the trick will be learning how to combine indigenous and endogenous processes with external approaches.[81] Until the world's peacemakers get better at delivering both, the world's peacekeepers will be in for a tough time. And, as the next chapter shows, many of them had a very rough time dealing with Africa's wars.

Notes

1 Harbom, Högbladh and Wallensteen, ‘Armed conflict’. See also Wallensteen, *Understanding*, p. 77 and Toft, ‘Ending civil wars’, p. 14.

2 UCDP categorize each agreement as a comprehensive agreement, a partial agreement or a peace process agreement, depending on whether the agreement is seen as a final product in a peace process or if the parties still have outstanding issues that have to be solved. UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset v.2.0, 1975–2011, http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/datasets/ucdp_peace_agreement_dataset/.

3 See the UN Peacemaker website at www.peacemaker.un.org.

4 Brahimi and Ahmed, *In Pursuit*, p. 5.

5 See, for example, Crocker, Hampson and Aall, *Taming Intractable Conflicts*.

6 UCDP Peace Agreement Dataset v.2.0, 1975–2011.

7 Luttwak, ‘Give war a chance’.

8 Tull and Mehler, ‘The hidden costs’, p. 394.

9 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, p. 171.

10 Clapham, ‘Rwanda’. See also Spears, ‘Understanding inclusive’; Tull and Mehler, ‘The hidden costs’, p. 376.

11 See Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*.

12 The Arusha Accords gave the ruling *Mouvement révolutionnaire national pour le développement et la Démocratie* and the Rwandan Patriotic Front five cabinet positions each, the *Mouvement démocratique républicain* four, the *Parti social démocrate* and the *Parti libéral* three each, and the *Parti démocrate chrétien* one. The extremist *Convention pour la défense de la république* was excluded from the transitional government. The armed forces were divided on a fifty–fifty basis for the troops, with Hutu elements retaining 60 per cent of the senior officers. For an excellent discussion, see Jones, *Peacemaking*.

13 For a legal perspective on these issues, see Levitt, *Illegal Peace*.

14 Lijphart, *Democracy* and ‘The power-sharing approach’.

15 According to UCDP data, between 2002 and 2011, there were seventeen peace agreements involving power-sharing in five African states: Sudan, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC and Burundi.

16 Lemarchand, ‘Consociationalism’, p. 2.

17 For a persuasive argument that political exclusion is at the heart of many civil wars, see Call, *Why Peace Fails*.

18 Walter, ‘The critical barrier’.

19 Ottaway, ‘Democratization’, p. 248.

20 Spears, ‘Understanding inclusive’, p. 116.

21 Tull and Mehler, ‘The hidden costs’, p. 386.

22 Lemarchand, ‘Consociationalism’, pp. 7–12.

23 Ibid., p. 11.

24 Ibid., p. 19.

25 Mehler, ‘Peace and power sharing’, p. 453.

26 Analysts differ on how likely negotiated settlements are to break down. Using a data-set of ninety-one civil wars between 1945 and 1993, Roy Licklider concluded that, of those which were brought to a close by negotiated settlement, war restarted within five years in 50 per cent of cases compared with only 15 per cent of the wars which ended in military victory by one side (Licklider, ‘The consequences’). Suhrke and Samset, on the other hand, concluded that the rate for this type of risk of civil war recurrence was only 20 to 26 per cent. They do not appear to confine their analysis to civil wars that were terminated by negotiated settlements (Suhrke and Samset, ‘What's in a figure?’). Based on an analysis of civil wars between 1940 and 2007, Monica Toft concluded that negotiated settlements increase the chances of war recurrence by 27 per cent, relative to all other types of civil war termination (Toft, ‘Ending civil wars’, p. 16).

27 Zartman, ‘The timing’.

28 Bigombe, Collier and Sambanis, ‘Policies’.

29 Sawyer, ‘Violent conflicts’, p. 451.

30 See Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*; Toft, *Securing the Peace*.

31 *Mixage* referred to troops of different ethnicities serving in the same units, whereas *brassage* was when troops were stationed in areas of the country well away from their ethnic homeland.

32 See Adebajo, ‘Liberia’.

33 See Walter, ‘The critical barrier’, p. 361; Stedman, ‘Spoiler problems’; Walter, ‘Designing transitions’.

34 Bentley and Southall, *An African*.

35 See Melvern, *A People Betrayed*; Dallaire, *Shake Hands*.

36 See also Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 183–91.

37 See Anderlini, *Women*, pp. 61–3.

38 O'Reilly, Súilleabháin, Paffenholz, *Reimagining Peacemaking*.

39 Mehler, ‘Peace and power sharing’, p. 472.

40 Spears, ‘Understanding inclusive’, p. 110.

41 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, p. 183.

42 Keen, *Conflict and Collusion*, pp. 253–66.

43 Richards and Vincent, ‘Sierra Leone’.

44 Tull and Mehler, ‘The hidden costs’, p. 395.

45 Ibid., p. 375. See also Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 184–5.

46 Tull and Mehler, ‘The hidden costs’, p. 388. See also Clapham, ‘Rwanda’.

47 Stedman, ‘Spoiler problems’, p. 11.

48 Tull and Mehler, ‘The hidden costs’, p. 394.

49 de Waal, *The Real Politics*, p. 39.

50 Ibid.

51 de Waal, ‘The political marketplace’.

52 Ibid.

53 This summary is taken from de Waal, ‘The political marketplace’.

54 de Waal, *The Real Politics*, pp. 26, 98, 182, 190.

55 Ibid., p. 57.

56 Ibid., p. 194.

57 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, p. 193.

58 Walter, ‘The critical barrier’ and ‘Designing transitions’; Stedman, ‘Spoiler problems’.

59 Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*, p. 11.

60 Doyle, ‘Strategy’, p. 79.

61 Patrick Johnston's study of rebel groups in Liberia and Sierra Leone makes the same point. Johnston, ‘The geography’, pp. 136–7.

62 The quotations are from de Waal, ‘Mission without end?’, pp. 106, 107, 108 and 112, respectively.

63 See Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 11–24.

64 Crocker et al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, p. 106.

65 See de Waal, *War in Darfur*, especially chaps 8–12.

66 See the figures for 2008 at http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/.

67 Hanlon, ‘Is the international community’.

68 See de Waal, *Demilitarizing the Mind*; Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*.

69 The transformation of African military organizations into political parties has been patchy at best. On the one hand, some defeated insurgencies, notably the RUF and UNITA, clearly failed to gain popular support at the ballot box after the war's end. In Mozambique, however, RENAMO did undergo a significant transition which allowed it to compete in postwar politics. Perhaps more worrying was the reluctance to shed military habits within insurgencies which became governing regimes (or part of governing regimes), such as the RPF in Rwanda, the SPLM in Sudan, the EPLF in Eritrea and ZANU-PF in Zimbabwe. See de Zeeuw (ed.), *From Soldiers*, pp. 55–102, 157–78; Prunier, *Africa's World War*, pp. 22–4.

70 Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*, p. 5. See also Toft, *Securing the Peace*.

71 This paragraph relies on Brahimi and Ahmed, *In Pursuit*. Quotations are from pp. 6 and 9.

72 Patrick Mazimhaka, cited in Prunier, *Africa's World War*, p. 224.

73 Ibid., p. 225.

74 *The Economist*, 17 July 1999.

75 Crocker et al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, p. 76. See also Downs and Stedman, ‘Evaluation issues’.

76 Crocker et al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, p. 25.

77 Brahimi and Ahmed, *In Pursuit*, p. 4.

78 Crocker et al., *Taming Intractable Conflicts*, p. 89.

79 Toft, ‘Ending civil wars’.

80 See Booth and Wheeler, *The Security Dilemma*, especially part 3.

81 See Murithi, ‘African indigenous’.

Chapter Ten
Peace Operations

Arguably the most visible international response to Africa's wars was the proliferation of peace operations, which between 1990 and 2015 numbered just over eighty – far more than on any other continent.[1] This period was also the most tumultuous in the history of peacekeeping.[2] The operations themselves assumed various shapes and sizes, from tiny observer missions to huge enterprises involving tens of thousands of personnel. They were authorized and conducted by a wide variety of actors and international organizations, although most had the support of the UN Security Council. Their mandates ranged from observing ceasefires, protecting humanitarian relief supplies, supporting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, strengthening the rule of law and public security, supporting weak governments, protecting civilians, counter-insurgency, and in some cases war-fighting. As instruments of conflict management, they produced decidedly mixed results. This was in large part because the UN and other organizations had to learn while on the job how to keep the peace in some of Africa's messiest civil wars. These organizations also had to develop the relevant tools and structures as they went along. Chapter 8 analysed the international efforts to build an African peace and security architecture, but it is often forgotten that at the start of the 1990s the UN's Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) did not exist. The institutions of the UN's peacekeeping system thus also underwent a crash course in professionalization, with Africa a crucial laboratory.[3]

In this sense, the story of peacekeeping in Africa after the Cold War was in part a story of trying to professionalize peace operations. Since peace operations are a reflection of international society's assumptions and priorities about conflict management, tracing their evolution provides an important barometer of the extent and depth of international engagement with Africa's armed conflicts. The results are instructive. On the positive side, peace operations helped shepherd transitions from war to peace in places such as Namibia, Mozambique, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Comoros and Côte d'Ivoire. On the other hand, peacekeepers failed to stop

mass killings in Rwanda, Angola, Sudan, DRC, South Sudan, CAR and elsewhere, and sometimes abused and exploited the local people they were supposed to help protect. They also struggled to help reform authoritarian systems of governance that were a major ingredient in many of Africa's armed conflicts. Probably the central explanations for this mixed record were that some mission mandates were simply much tougher than others and some operations were given more resources and high-level political support than others.

The chapter discusses these issues by starting with an overview of Africa's peacekeeping landscape after the end of the Cold War by examining both African and external, primarily UN, initiatives. The second section then analyses nine of the most serious challenges that confronted peacekeepers on the African continent. The central conclusions are that peacekeepers were often used as a substitute for an effective political strategy focused on conflict resolution and that these missions were bound by the international legal requirement of seeking consent from host governments, even when those same regimes were a big part of the problem in several African conflicts, notably Rwanda, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia.

Africa's Peacekeeping Landscape after the Cold War

By mid-2015, Africa was home to a record number of about 120,000 uniformed peacekeepers, deployed in nine UN missions, three AU-authorized operations, one conducted by ECOWAS, and several run by the EU or France. But Africa's peacekeeping landscape was not always this crowded (see figure 10.1 and the Appendix). To explain how such a complex situation developed we need to analyse two intertwined sets of stories: first, conflict management efforts carried out by African states and international organizations; and, second, non-African, primarily UN and, later, EU initiatives. Although it is misleading to separate these two sets of initiatives completely – African governments were clearly involved in the UN's activities and external actors were usually involved in African initiatives – they did involve different sets of political dynamics which, at times, veered in very different directions.

In terms of sheer scale, the conflict management initiatives conducted by the UN and other non-African actors were considerably larger than those carried out by their African counterparts. Overall, between 1990 and 2015, African institutions led thirty-five peace operations. At their peak, these missions involved the deployment of just over 96,000 uniformed personnel (the OAU missions accounted for approximately 300 of these; deployments by sub-regional organizations, principally ECOWAS, amounted to about 36,000 personnel; while about 60,000 were deployed as AU-authorized peacekeepers). By way of comparison, during the same period non-African organizations and actors, primarily the UN, conducted forty-seven peace operations on the African continent. These involved the deployment of approximately 300,000 uniformed personnel, of whom approximately 243,000 were UN peacekeepers, while some 57,000 were deployed by other actors (of the latter group, 37,000 came from the US-led UNITAF operation in Somalia, 1992–3). In the twenty-first century, the UN's peace operations in Africa have accounted for the majority of its peacekeeping forces worldwide (see figure 10.2).

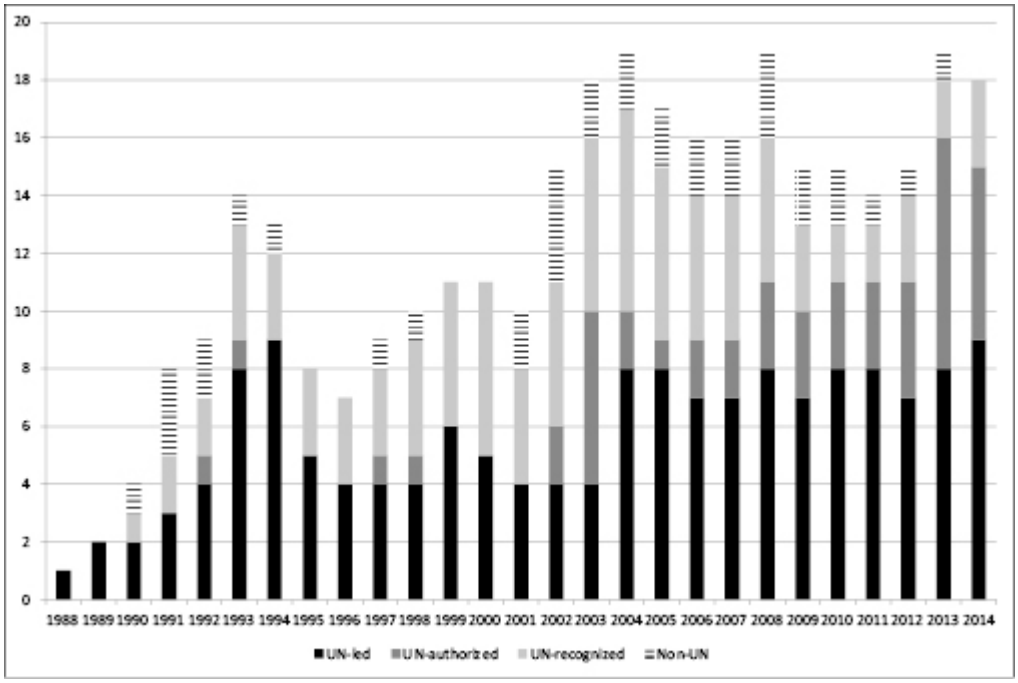

Figure 10.1 Peace Operations in Africa 1988–2014

Source: adapted from Bellamy and Williams, 'Trends in peace operations, 1947–2013'.

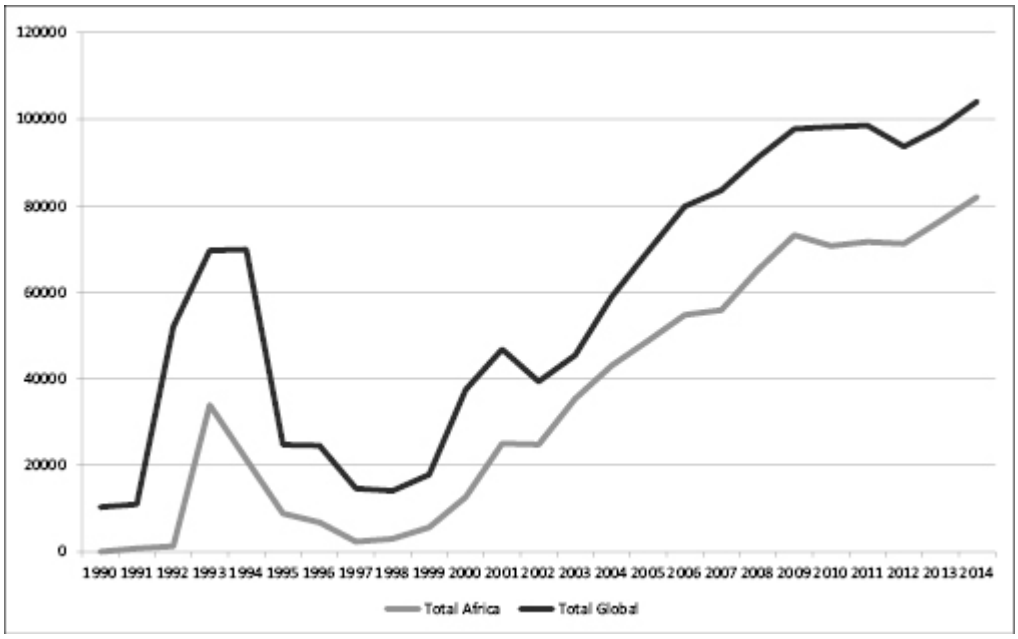

Figure 10.2 UN peacekeepers in Africa 1990–2014

Source: Author's compilation from http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml.

The African side of the story can be summarized as unfolding in two largely

distinct phases: attempts at peacekeeping before the AU was established and attempts afterwards. During the first phase, military peace operations were generally conducted by some of Africa's sub-regional organizations, with the OAU deploying some small-scale observer missions. After 2003, peacekeeping on the continent was orchestrated primarily by the AU but with the occasional sub-regional operation. As discussed in chapter 8, while in 1993 the OAU established a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, it did not conduct any significant military peace operations, although it did undertake a variety of small-scale observation and fact-finding missions, mainly in the Great Lakes region and the Comoros (see table 8.1, p. 192).[4]

In part because of the OAU's lack of peacekeeping capabilities, between 1990 and 2003 military peace operations were generally conducted by Africa's sub-regional organizations, most notably the ECOWAS.[5] On the positive side, these organizations were at least attempting to fill the conflict management gap left during the 1990s when some of the UN's most powerful member states effectively turned their back on certain African wars, notably those in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan.[6] In others, such as Burundi, the UN explicitly ignored local calls for a peacekeeping operation and instead sent only a fact-finding mission.[7] It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the UN's lack of engagement pushed Africa's regional organizations into operations for which they were not well designed and which they were not ready to execute.

On the negative side, these operations suffered from numerous problems. First, some of these operations were conducted with dubious international legality. While those involving ECOWAS could be justified legally as collective defence operations under Article 51 of the UN Charter (i.e. helping to defend a state's *de jure* authorities from insurgents), they were generally sold to the world as peacekeeping operations, which should not slide into enforcement activities without explicit authorization from the UN Security Council, as stipulated in Article 53 of the UN Charter. Part of the uncertainty over this issue stemmed from the UN Security Council's less than clear response. As Jane Boulden observed, in response to such operations the Security Council ‘demonstrated relatively little concern for ensuring the primacy of the Charter’ and was ‘remarkably unprotective of its own turf’.[8] A second problem was the lack of unity and consensus

displayed within the regional organizations themselves. In Liberia, for instance, ECOWAS broke its own internal rules for deploying military operations, with small factions within the organization conducting the missions.[9]

A third set of problems revolved around practical issues, such as strategy, competence, deployment, management, logistics, and the provision of suitable materiel.[10] In the ECOWAS mission in Liberia, for instance, ECOMOG troops proved inept when, in September 1990, Liberia's President Samuel Doe was captured and subsequently killed while supposedly under their protection. A fourth problem was the lack of professionalism and discipline displayed by some of these regional peacekeepers. Although most peace operations suffered some degree of misconduct by their personnel, ECOMOG troops reached new heights with their frequent summary executions of prisoners, as well as looting and sexual violence carried out against the local populations. Indeed, Liberian civilians came up with an alternative name for the West African force: Every Car Or Moving Object Gone.[11]

In the final analysis, perhaps the most damning indictment of these operations was that they were not particularly effective in managing the conflicts in question. In Liberia, ECOMOG only delayed Charles Taylor's bid to become president and thus arguably simply helped prolong the civil war.[12] In Sierra Leone, ECOWAS was again internally divided and proved unable to defeat the Revolutionary United Front rebels. Instead, in July 1999 it helped facilitate the deeply flawed and misconceived Lomé peace agreement before Nigeria's new government withdrew many of its troops and passed the peacekeeping baton to the UN. In Guinea-Bissau, ECOMOG failed to alter the country's kleptocratic style of politics or the huge rifts between the political elites tied to the presidency and the armed forces.

Things began to change with the establishment of the new African Union. As demonstrated in chapter 8, the AU's Peace and Security Council became the hub of the continent's new peace and security architecture, and the AU led or authorized a dozen peace operations between 1993 and 2015 involving more than 60,000 uniformed peacekeepers.

The story of non-African peace operations had a rather different trajectory. The initial optimism that accompanied the end of the Cold War saw a raft of

new UN operations begin between 1988 and 1992 in Angola, Namibia, Somalia and Mozambique. While the operations in Namibia and Mozambique went relatively well, those in Angola and especially Somalia went badly. After the so-called Black Hawk Down episode in Mogadishu in October 1993, the United States led a general retreat from UN peacekeeping, especially in Africa.[13] The most immediate and direct casualty of this attitude was the UN mission in Rwanda, UNAMIR, which was left severely under-resourced, with the consequence that the world effectively abandoned Rwanda's political moderates as well as its entire Tutsi population during the genocide of 1994.[14] Ironically, Washington adopted its new, more restrictive set of principles for engaging in multilateral peace operations in May 1994, one month into Rwanda's genocide.[15]

As noted above, the UN's relative disengagement after the Black Hawk Down episode encouraged the idea that Africans should resolve the continent's problems for themselves – commonly referred to as the ‘African solutions to African problems’ approach. A specific variant of the regionalization approach to peacekeeping, the basic idea was that ‘each region … should be responsible for its own peacemaking and peacekeeping, with some financial and technical support from the West but few, if any, military or police contingents from outside the region’.[16]

‘African solutions’ rhetoric found support from African leaders and Western governments, especially the US, the UK and France. The general thrust of the African position was captured by South African President Thabo Mbeki's arguments about how outsiders should respond to the war in Darfur, Sudan. ‘It's critically important’, Mbeki argued, ‘that the African continent should deal with these conflict situations. … We have not asked for anybody outside of the African continent to deploy troops in Darfur. It's an African responsibility, and we can do it.’[17] Similarly, Western governments continued endorsing the ‘African solutions’ approach into the twenty-first century. As US Secretary of State Colin Powell made clear on a tour of four African states in spring 2001, ‘Africans themselves must bear the lion's share of the responsibility for bringing stability to the continent’ and should not ‘sit around waiting for money to come [their] way’.[18] More recently still, the then British prime minister, Tony Blair, joined the chorus,

stating that, although ‘the West [should] fund it … peacekeeping [was] Africa's responsibility’.[19]

Several factors explain the resonance of the ‘African solutions’ idea.[20] First, it had deep historical roots in the anti-colonial struggle and reflected the powerful anti-imperial sentiment that Africans should be able to decide their own futures without being dictated to by outsiders. It thus drew on earlier pan-African themes such as the ‘African personality’, negritude, and the ‘try Africa first’ approach, which were important ideological rallying points in the late nineteenth and the twentieth century. In a positive sense, therefore, the ‘African solutions’ approach represented a normative defence of the pluralist conception of international society and a rejection of neo-colonial enterprises.[21]

Second, its supporters emphasized that Chapter VIII of the UN Charter encourages African regional organizations to take the lead in the peaceful resolution of disputes in their own neighbourhood. This is true, but it also bans them from undertaking enforcement activities without prior authorization from the Security Council.

As noted above, a third argument concluded that devising ‘African solutions’ was a necessary response to international disengagement from Africa after the Cold War. By the mid-1990s, the neglect of Africa had become so serious that the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) concluded that, ‘If there is a common thread running throughout Africa, it is fading international attention. The outstanding feature of Western policy in Africa is its absence.’[22] The obvious lesson to draw was that Africans could not afford to wait for the Western cavalry but would instead have to devise their own peacekeeping action plans.

A final argument noted that, even if international attention returned to Africa – as it did in the twenty-first century – Africans would be unwise to rely upon external donors whose priorities were notoriously fickle and who were generally less interested in resolving the continent's conflicts than in fighting their own ‘war against terrorism’ or securing access to African resources. Indeed, the former point was even acknowledged by Tony Blair's Commission for Africa, which concluded in 2005 that ‘part of the rationale for promoting “African solutions” is that recent history has repeatedly

demonstrated that African states and organisations are more likely to show the political will to respond to crises than non-African actors'.[23]

It was against this backdrop that UN peacekeeping began a resurgence of sorts in Africa in 1999 with the authorization of two missions, in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the DRC (MONUC). Initially, however, the UN's return to peacekeeping in Africa did not go well. While MONUC was unable to deploy in significant numbers until after President Laurent Kabila was assassinated in January 2001, UNAMSIL found itself suffering humiliation at the hands of RUF rebels until an intervention by British forces in May 2000 started to turn the tide of the war in favour of the UN and the legitimate government of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.[24] As demand for peace operations in Africa increased, so did concerns of overstretch at the UN. Western governments, however, began talking once again about 'saving Africa' – most notably in Tony Blair's 2001 speech to the Labour Party conference in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the US. As a consequence, Western forces did make a few appearances in Africa, although usually not under UN command and control structures. Despite these ad hoc operations, the US, the UK and France continued to deploy very few personnel to UN peace operations on the continent.

By 2005, the trickle of new UN operations in Africa had become a virtual flood, with large expansions of UNAMSIL and MONUC as well as sizeable new operations deployed to Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Sudan. By this stage, operations in Africa were accounting for over two-thirds of the UN's global peacekeeping commitments.[25] Yet it wasn't long before commentators suggested that UN peacekeeping, especially in Africa, had run into another crisis. By the late 2000s, peacekeeping was said to have entered an era of strategic uncertainty, not least because three crucial pillars on which it was based had begun to erode: a shared political vision of peacekeeping at the UN Security Council, a willingness of financial contributors to pay the rising bill, and a willingness of troop contributors, critically from South Asia, to deploy their personnel on more complex and potentially dangerous missions.[26]

Since 2011, another major expansion of UN peacekeeping in Africa took place, which led to a majority of the UN's peacekeepers on the continent being deployed in just three countries: the DRC, Sudan and South Sudan. In

2011, Ethiopia led a new UN force in the Abyei region of Sudan, while South Sudan's independence saw UNMIS expelled from the north but a large new mission, UNMISS, established in the south. In 2013 and 2014, two new UN missions took over from African-led forces in Mali (MINUSMA) and CAR (MINUSCA). This brought the total number of UN uniformed peacekeepers in Africa to more than 80,000, an all-time record.[27] Although not a peacekeeping force, in late 2014, the UN also deployed its first emergency 'health-keeping' operation to stem the Ebola epidemic in West Africa: the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER).

Major Challenges[28]

No two peace operations are the same, and hence they all face a unique set of challenges. Nevertheless, some challenges appeared regularly across different missions in Africa, and this section analyses some of the most significant, employing illustrations from various UN and non-UN operations.

Difficult environments and complex conflicts

As George Downs and Stephen Stedman noted, peacekeeping is more difficult in some environments than others. In particular, they concluded that nine factors can make the strategic environment more challenging:

1. a high number of warring parties;
2. the absence of a peace agreement signed by all major warring parties before intervention and with a minimum of coercion;
3. a high likelihood of 'spoilers';[29]
4. a collapsed state – i.e. a lack of functioning state institutions;
5. a high number of soldiers: cases with more than 50,000 soldiers are considered particularly difficult;
6. relatively easy access to disposable natural resources;
7. the presence of hostile neighbouring states or networks;

8. wars of secession (since these can frequently revert to all or nothing struggles);
9. the unwillingness of major or regional powers to engage in conflict management/peacemaking.[30]

To their list should be added the fact that operations deployed in remote areas with harsh physical terrain and a lack of basic infrastructure faced huge logistical challenges. Darfur, Abyei, South Sudan, eastern DRC, CAR, northern Mali and Somalia are all environmentally inhospitable regions where potable water is scarce or very difficult to move, where road and rail infrastructure is minimal if not completely absent, and with a few exceptions are very far from a major coastal port and, in some cases, almost desert. Such harsh operating environments put a premium on mobility and hence costly aviation assets. Harsh climatic conditions also took a huge toll on equipment, which rapidly degraded. All of this added up to rising peacekeeping budgets.

Based on their analysis of over a dozen peacebuilding operations, Downs and Stedman concluded that the four most important factors were the existence of spoilers, neighbouring states hostile to the peace agreement concerned, the presence of disposable resources, and the presence of major power interest. While the first three reduced the chances of a successful operation, the last improved its chances. Indeed, without some sort of major power interest, Downs and Stedman advised international peacekeepers not to get involved.[31] Many of the peace operations deployed in Africa had to contend with most of the factors on this list.

In general, six common characteristics of African conflicts stand out as posing particular challenges for peacekeeping. First, as discussed in chapter 2, Africa's wars did not fit neatly within state borders. Thus, while the sinews of war in East, West and Central Africa regularly stretched across political boundaries, peace operations were generally deployed to particular countries or parts of countries. Peacekeepers were thus only ever able to deal with part of the problem confronting them. The UN's recognition of the cross-border nature of the conflicts across Sudan, Chad and the CAR and the deployment of related peace operations thus represented a welcome development.

A second complicating factor was the problematic nature of most of the peace agreements that peacekeepers were asked to support (see chapter 9). These agreements were often problematic in at least two senses: they did not address the complete range of incompatibilities driving the war and they were not fully comprehensive, inasmuch as they were signed by a limited number of the warring factions and usually ignored unarmed groups altogether. This left peacekeepers operating in zones where the recurrence of warfare was a constant threat. In some cases the war had not stopped at all, and peacekeepers were viewed by some parties as hostile elements attempting to impose an unjust peace. The AU mission in Sudan after the Darfur Peace Agreement (May 2006) and the AU mission in Somalia after the Djibouti Agreement (August 2008) both suffered from this problem.

A third common problem was the large number of conflict parties. At various stages, peacekeepers in the DRC and Darfur, for example, were faced with approximately twenty armed rebel factions. Things were made even more difficult because many of these actors had unprofessional armed forces, sometimes comprised of little more than militias, thugs and criminals who rarely respected the laws of war or consistently followed chains of command. This raised the likelihood that armed groups would deliberately target civilians, either because they were considered enemies or because they possessed resources useful to the belligerents. A related challenge was that the conflict parties often formed bewildering and shifting alliances which made it difficult for peacekeepers to know who to support. The splintering of rebel factions in both the DRC and Darfur were cases in point. Moreover, armed groups whose members relied upon warfare to generate their livelihoods had a vested interest in maintaining conflict and hence often resented the presence of peacekeepers.

A fifth problem was that some peace operations found themselves confronting non-state actors who explicitly and fundamentally rejected the basic rules of international humanitarian law, including the crucial distinction between combatant and non-combatant. For the UN in particular, this posed a major problem as its peacekeeping doctrine is premised on the notion that belligerents would at least accept the legitimacy of such rules even if they did not always respect them.[32] Yet non-state actors in Somalia, Mali, DRC and elsewhere rejected them entirely.

Finally, some African theatres witnessed a growing nexus between the illicit world and organized violence. In DRC, for example, UN peacekeepers faced a large number of non-state armed groups that behave in similar ways to mafia-type organizations as they try to exploit the illicit transnational trafficking markets, including for minerals, timber and wildlife.[33] In other theatres, from Somalia to CAR to Mali, insurgents increasingly relied on connections with transnational organized crime to fund their activities. Such dynamics put a premium on peace operations developing effective policing, investigative and intelligence-gathering capabilities.[34] Yet these were lacking in every mission.

Coordinating ‘partnership peacekeeping’

No single organization was equipped to deal adequately with all of Africa's conflict-related problems. Although the UN was the most significant peacekeeping organization in post-Cold War Africa, it never had a monopoly on such activities. This gave rise to what the UN recently started calling ‘partnership peacekeeping’.[35] This entails collaboration on peace operations between two or more multilateral institutions and/or various bilateral actors. As the UN Secretary-General put it, ‘the engagement of regional partners in peacekeeping alongside United Nations operations has become the norm rather than the exception. Nowhere is this fact more evident than in Africa’.[36] Several factors drove this trend, including widespread recognition that no single actor could cope with Africa's security challenges alone and that different actors brought comparative advantages. In Africa, the pivotal partnerships involved relations among the UN, the AU, the RECs, the EU and important bilateral actors – principally France, the United States and Britain. They included sequential and parallel operations as well as a wide range of assistance packages, usually provided by the UN and Western states to African actors.

This proliferation of peacekeeping partnerships posed two principal challenges. At the strategic level it was often difficult to ensure coordination between these different actors over goals and methods.[37] While most actors agreed in the abstract sense that greater coordination was necessary for effective peacekeeping, none of them liked to be ‘coordinated’ if this meant following another institution's agenda. Such strategic coordination was especially important during the planning stages for potential missions but

was often notable only for its absence. The AU's inability to pay for its own peace operations meant that its relationship with the UN and other donor states and institutions (notably the EU) became particularly complicated. Among other things, this generated a protracted debate over how to ensure African ‘ownership’ of operations that were paid for predominantly by Western states or the UN (as was the case with the AU missions in Sudan and Somalia). In Mali and CAR it led to a quick transition from the African-led operations to UN missions.

At a more tactical level, the multiplicity of actors posed challenges related to interoperability, not least the fact that commanding multinational peacekeeping forces was made more difficult because personnel from different countries had been exposed to different doctrine and training and used distinct equipment. The main attempt to overcome this problem was the establishment of various peacekeeping training centres and the effort to build an African Standby Force, discussed in chapter 8.[38]

Particularly since 2005, it is the UN's partnership with the AU that has been most important for peace operations on the continent. This partnership operated across several institutional levels and in numerous operational theatres, involving cooperation in New York and Addis Ababa, as well as in field missions; annual consultative meetings between the AU Peace and Security Council and members of the UN Security Council; joint field assessment missions; the creation of a ten-year capacity-building programme to bolster the AU's capabilities in the peace and security realm; desk-to-desk meetings between UN and AU officials; the formation of a Joint Task Force on peace and security; joint mission planning in several missions (notably Somalia, Central Africa, Mali and CAR), as well as a new Africa Logistics Council established in 2014.[39]

Given the lack of indigenous AU capabilities, it often fell upon the UN to take over the peacekeeping baton from African-led operations, as occurred in the transitions from AU to UN operations in Burundi (AMIB to ONUB), Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI to UNOCI), Mali (AFISMA to MINUSMA), and CAR (MISCA to MINUSCA). The UN recently acknowledged a series of lessons that need to be learned to ensure such transitions work smoothly.[40] To date, UNSOA remains the only case where the UN has used its assessed peacekeeping budget to fund an African-led mission (AMISOM).[41]

However, both the Prodi Panel (2008) and the recent High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) report (2015) called for the UN Security Council to consider on a case-by-case basis funding African-led operations that had been authorized by the Council from the assessed peacekeeping budget.[42] Hence it remains an open question whether UNSOA will be replicated in other theatres.

Despite some heated arguments, most notably over the Libyan intervention in 2011, the relationship between the UN and AU has gradually improved since the mid-2000s. The remaining sources of tension stemmed from questions over who has the authority to lead the political response to particular crises and the AU's lack of indigenous sources of finance, and hence capabilities, which undermined its credibility and complicated its search for local ownership of peace and security challenges on the continent.

What are peace operations for?

Unsurprisingly, the proliferation of actors involved in peace operations also generated considerable debate over their purposes, priorities and, crucially, their limits.[43] Africa's contemporary conflict dynamics only intensified these debates, with peace operations on the continent being given a wide range of mandates including the interrelated but distinct tasks of peacekeeping, counter-insurgency/war-fighting, atrocity prevention, state-building and even counter-terrorism. In sum, what were the problems that peace operations could reasonably be expected to fix, and what problems lay beyond their capabilities? It was the UN's approach to peacekeeping that came in for most scrutiny, as various African actors asked if its existing guidelines and principles were appropriate for responding to some of Africa's bloodiest war zones. Political pressures on the UN Security Council saw it authorize some very wide-ranging mandates for its peace operations, notably in DRC, Mali, South Sudan and CAR. But it had also refused to be the first responder to the wars in Somalia, Mali and CAR. The challenge was not only how to agree on the potential list of tasks peace operations should undertake, but also to decide how to prioritize among them. This, in turn, raised questions about how to train and equip peacekeepers to implement such mandates, given that each set of tasks required different force requirements, capabilities and training. The protection of civilians

posed a particularly difficult set of issues (see below). These different tasks also have variable timetables and likelihood of success, with counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, state-building and atrocity prevention goals being essentially unending. Similarly, it is impossible for any peace operation to completely eliminate threats to civilians or to build a state without a reasonably effective and legitimate set of local authorities to assist. And yet in some important theatres, including Somalia, South Sudan and CAR, no such local authorities existed.

It was the question of when peacekeepers should use military force beyond self-defence that generated some of the most fundamental debates about peace operations in Africa.[44] Peacekeepers have a long history of using proactive military force in Africa, dating back to ONUC in the Congo (1960–4). In the post-Cold War era it was probably UNOSOM 2's activities in Somalia (1993) that generated most controversy for its actions and UNAMIR in Rwanda (1994) for its relative inaction. But there have been frequent examples of peacekeeping operations coming close to war-fighting against particular ‘spoiler’ groups in a variety of theatres, including Sierra Leone, DRC, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, Mali and Central and West Africa against the LRA and Boko Haram, respectively. Despite this track record, the formation of the Force Intervention Brigade within MONUSCO in 2013 generated a novel lexicon from the UN Security Council, which mandated it to ‘neutralize armed groups’ by carrying out ‘targeted offensive operations’.[45]

When the UN Security Council authorized proactive military force beyond self-defence it was usually in the name of either protecting civilians or defeating spoiler groups.[46] The AU has also regularly authorized its forces to protect civilians and defeat particular spoilers, notably in the Comoros, Somalia, Mali, CAR and in its multinational task forces against the LRA and Boko Haram. For the UN, this raised questions about whether it could remain an impartial actor. The UN's response was, ‘yes, it could’, because impartiality is not the same as neutrality. Specifically, impartiality permitted the UN to use force against recalcitrant parties: ‘Just as a good referee is impartial, but will penalize infractions, so a peacekeeping operation should not condone actions by the parties that violate the undertakings of the peace process or the international norms and principles that a United Nations peacekeeping operation upholds.’[47] However, these nuances were clearly

lost on some armed groups who did not view UN peacekeepers as impartial and targeted them accordingly.

Second, it raised questions about whether it was a sensible policy for the UN to pursue given the many difficulties involved with command and control in its peacekeeping operations.[48] UN peacekeeping operations were certainly not well designed to fight wars, which are best done by states unilaterally, or in coalitions of the willing.[49] Moreover, most UN contributors did not sign up to fight wars or undertake proactive combat operations against determined adversaries. As a result of these inherent limitations, the latest HIPPO report concluded that ‘extreme caution must guide any call for a United Nations peacekeeping operation to undertake enforcement tasks and that any such mandated task should be a time-limited, exceptional measure.’[50] Nor, it wrote, should UN peacekeepers conduct counter-terrorism operations.[51] Political pressures at the UN Security Council will make this much easier said than done, but it is an important warning nonetheless. The Panel also made the fundamental point that politics, not military force, is the peacekeeper's primary weapon. In its words, ‘political solutions, not military force, are the true force multipliers’ for peacekeepers.[52]

Managing mandates

Apart from relatively rare cases such as the operation in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and that between Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), peacekeepers in Africa were asked to undertake a long list of more complicated tasks than simply monitoring a ceasefire or demilitarized zone. Put bluntly, they were often asked to help build institutions of liberal democratic governance in some of the continent's poorest and conflict-ridden states. The usual lists of tasks ranged from electoral supervision, human rights monitoring, civilian protection, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian relief, providing security and order, strengthening the rule of law, and overseeing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR) programmes. These complex mandates did not always go down well with the troop-contributing countries. As the Indian representative to the UN put it in mid-2009, ‘Peacekeeping mandates have become too broad and too all-encompassing.’[53]

One problem was the lack of clarity over how peacekeepers should fulfil certain objectives and the meaning of key terms. As the head of the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations observed, not only were mission mandates ‘more complex than ever’ but ‘there remains a lack of consensus on how certain mandate tasks should be fulfilled’.[54] Part of the problem was that even basic terminology used in mandates was often unclear: peacekeepers were often told to ‘assist’ authorities and ‘support’ processes using ‘all necessary measures’ without being given further specific instructions. But what, for instance, were the limits of assistance when peacekeepers were asked to ‘assist’ in the implementation of peace agreements or governments expanding their control over a territory? ‘Peacebuilding’ and ‘civilian protection’ were another two widely debated and confusing concepts.

The vague nature of such terms encouraged the tendency for different national contingents within a peace operation to interpret these general instructions in different ways. Sometimes this led them to ignore certain orders from their UN force commanders altogether. A particularly tragic example of a national contingent disobeying orders occurred within UNAMIR during Rwanda's 1994 genocide. In an internal letter written during the genocide, the Canadian force commander General Dallaire told the senior officer of the Bangladeshi contingent that the mission's mandate allowed it to try to protect civilians in danger of massacre. ‘Our orders from New York are quite explicit’, Dallaire wrote: ‘we are to conduct the evacuation of the expatriate community and to offer protection when feasible of Rwandese citizens. Within our peacekeeping rules of engagement we can use force to defend persons under UN protection and to prevent crimes against humanity. We must however balance the use of force with the requirement to protect our men.’[55] Nevertheless, members of the Bangladeshi contingent consistently ignored these orders, prompting Dallaire to issue the following complaint to UN headquarters in New York:

> The [Bangladeshi] contingent commander has consistently stated he is under national orders not to endanger his soldiers by evacuating Rwandese. They will evacuate expatriates but not local people. His junior officers have clearly stated that if they are stopped at a roadblock with local people in the convoy they will hand over these local people for inevitable killing rather than use their weapons in an attempt to save local people. This reticence to engage in dangerous operations and their stated reluctance to use their weapons in self-defence or in defence of crimes against humanity has led to widespread mistrust of this contingent among its peers in other units and amongst staff officers/UNMOs [military observers] at the headquarters when they are tasked to go with these men on dangerous missions.[56]

As it turned out, over the next few days members of the Bangladeshi contingent began to desert UNAMIR, taking UN vehicles with them, before UN Security Council Resolution 912 officially withdrew most of the mission, including their contingent.[57]

A second problem stemmed from peacekeepers being given contradictory tasks. In both DRC and South Sudan, for example, peacekeepers were told to help host governments extend their authority across the country and protect civilians in the full knowledge that the government's armed forces were among the principal perpetrators of violence against civilians. For instance, MONUC was mandated to support President Joseph Kabila's government and protect the country's civilians, yet government soldiers (in the FARDC) were responsible for a significant proportion of the crimes committed against Congolese civilians. By 2009, MONUC was supposed to help the FARDC attack various rebel groups in the east of the country but then had to withdraw its support from key elements of the Congolese army when it was proved they were responsible for a large number of atrocity crimes committed against civilians.[58] Peacekeepers had the legal right to use deadly force against host government forces that committed war crimes against local civilians. But in practice things were rarely that simple: either because government forces outnumbered the peacekeepers or because acting against the host government might cause it to expel the peace operation.

A third problem was the lack of prioritization of peacekeeping tasks. Instead, the norm was long lists from the UN Security Council or African Union with little guidance as to their relative priority. The initial mandate for UNMISS, for example, contained a list of well over forty different tasks. The UN's most recent operation in Africa, MINUSCA, made an explicit effort to overcome this problem by introducing the notion of ‘urgent temporary measures’, i.e. those tasks that should form the initial priority. Two high-level panels on UN peace operations made similar points, calling for peacekeeping mandates to be sequenced. In 2000, the Brahimi Report called for mandates to remain in draft form until the UN's member states provided the requisite resources.[59] In 2015, the HIPPO report called for a ‘two-stage sequenced mandating process’ with fewer priorities that would allow missions to develop over time rather than trying to do everything at once.[60]

On other occasions, the UN or AU might clarify the priorities, but then fail to adjust the resources, capabilities and force requirements available to the peacekeepers. Mandates might also be altered without providing peacekeepers with the necessary additional or different resources. Authorized reinforcements have become notorious for not arriving as planned, as occurred in eastern DRC in 2008 and South Sudan in early 2014. Similarly in Somalia, the UN Security Council massively increased the area of operations of its logistical support mission to the African Union forces, UNSOA, during 2012 without a concomitant budget increase.

Protecting civilians

Of all the mandated tasks given to peacekeepers, civilian protection is arguably the most important.[61] This is because regardless of the mission's other tasks, local populations will almost always judge peacekeepers on their ability to protect civilians in danger. In the worst-case scenarios, where UN peacekeepers failed to stop mass killings, the UN suffered the biggest hits to its reputation, most notably in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Although many peace operations in Africa grappled with the problems of civilian protection throughout the 1990s, it was not until 1999 that all UN multidimensional peacekeeping operations in Africa included some explicit element of civilian protection in their mandates. Since 2003, the EU (notably Operation Artemis and EUFOR missions in Chad and CAR) and

the AU (notably AMIS, AFISMA and MISCA) have also given some of their operations civilian protection tasks. In part, the surge of civilian protection mandates stemmed from the recognition that local civilians usually judged a mission's effectiveness on how well it protected them rather than other more technical criteria. But it was also because several UN high-level inquiries concluded that nothing hurt the UN's legitimacy more than the inability to distinguish between victims and aggressors and the failure to protect the former.[62] The OAU report into the 1994 genocide in Rwanda had a similar effect on the AU.[63]

But even when civilian protection mandates were issued, they came with geographic, political and operational caveats. First, peacekeepers were supposed to protect civilians ‘without prejudice to responsibility of host nation’ – despite the armed forces of some host governments being major perpetrators of civilian harm. Second, peacekeepers were only supposed to protect civilians within their existing ‘capabilities and areas of deployment’. In one sense, it was – quite rightly – left to force commanders on the ground to decide whether they had sufficient capabilities to carry out specific protection tasks. But, on the other hand, this often encouraged peacekeepers not to use force to protect civilians and to remain in their bases, which encouraged civilians to flock to them.[64] Letting civilians congregate inside and around UN bases was adopted as explicit policy by UNMISS in South Sudan.[65] In contrast, MONUSCO's leadership tried to keep civilians from pursuing this course of action by proactively deterring and coercing their tormentors.[66] Third, the focus was narrowed to protecting only those civilians ‘under imminent threat of violence’ – which, by definition, was too late for peacekeepers to succeed. In response to this problem, the UN has now started using the phrase ‘threat of violence’ without the reference to ‘imminent’ and emphasizing that peacekeepers should actively deter violence against civilians.[67]

Even with these caveats, UN peacekeepers struggled with how to translate this aspirational concept into practical military and policing tasks that could be trained and implemented in the field. It took the UN over a decade to develop guidelines and training regimes on how its peacekeepers could best operationalize this concept in the field.[68] A big part of the problem was that UN peacekeeping missions had traditionally not been permitted to use

intelligence-gathering capabilities because of political disputes within the UN General Assembly and Security Council. And yet it was impossible for a mission with limited resources to respond effectively to threats against civilians if it did not have access to accurate and timely intelligence about the sources of such threats. As a consequence, some operations, especially MONUSCO and UNMISS, began to innovate their own responses to overcoming this challenge.[69] The formation of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) in MINUSMA is the closest a UN peacekeeping operation has come to developing an intelligence-gathering capability.

Although most of the news reporting focused on the failures of peacekeepers to protect civilians, even in truly dire circumstances the presence of peacekeepers usually made the overall situation better, not worse.[70] For example, after Ugandan troops had withdrawn from Ituri in the DRC in spring 2003, some 700 Uruguayan peacekeepers managed to protect approximately 15,000 civilians in Bunia airport and MONUC's sector headquarters.[71] Similarly, in 2005 the Pakistani brigade in South Kivu helped provide civilians with safe passage through the Kahuzi-Biega park and organized village defence communities to alert peacekeepers to imminent attacks, reportedly by banging pots and blowing whistles.[72] And even amidst the carnage of Rwanda's genocide, the beleaguered UNAMIR peacekeepers were estimated at one time to have protected approximately 30,000 people.[73] The basic problem was that there was only so much even well-resourced peacekeepers could do. As one analysis correctly observed, peacekeeping operations could not ‘protect everyone from everything’, nor could they ‘operate without some semblance of a “peace to keep” or halt determined belligerents wholly backed by a state’.[74]

Host government consent

Almost all peace operations are based on the principle of host state consent; without it they cannot function and must withdraw.[75] Cooperation from the host state authorities is therefore a crucial part of mission success (or failure). However, several regimes in Africa created obstacles for UN peacekeepers in particular. In some cases, the host governments withdrew their consent for the presence of UN peacekeepers, effectively terminating the missions. This occurred in Burundi (2006), Eritrea (2008), Chad (2010)

and Sudan (2011). The reasons varied from general suspicion about UN motives to the Eritrean argument that UNMEE had failed to enforce the ruling of the Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission. On other occasions, host governments expressed disapproval at aspects of the peace operation's mandate and/or presence, but tolerated a continuation of the mission, including in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia (AMISOM) and DRC. In the latter case, this required a renaming and restructuring of MONUC into MONUSCO. In arguably the extreme case of Sudan and UNAMID, analysts coined the idea of ‘the Darfur line’ to describe a situation where a host government granted official consent for the deployment of peacekeepers but subsequently engaged in a deliberate set of obstructionist policies designed to weaken the mission.[76]

However, the peacekeepers are not completely passive players in these relationships. Sometimes, UN officials pushed back against the stated wishes of the host government. In 2010 in DRC, for example, UN officials successfully resisted President Kabila's threats to close down the mission, instead reconfiguring it. The most controversial case, however, came in 2010 in Côte d'Ivoire when UN diplomats and UNOCI were accused of ousting a legitimate government: whereas the UN saw UNOCI's role as enabling the legitimate winner of the elections to take office, the incumbent regime of Laurent Gbagbo, his supporters and some academics claimed the UN had engaged in forcible regime change.[77]

Capability gaps

UN and non-UN peace operations alike consistently struggled to acquire the necessary resources, in part because their force generation processes failed to match the right kinds of contributors and assets to the mandated tasks. The resulting capability gaps assumed several forms. First of all, peace operations in Africa were commonly forced to operate with insufficient numbers of troops. It was always standard practice for politics at the UN Security Council to generate authorized deployment numbers at the low end of the recommended spectrum. (Indeed, the same is probably true for all international organizations.) This was usually done to save on costs and in order to increase the likelihood that member states would be seen to meet these targets. This was a problem that dogged many peacekeeping operations. In the case of MONUC in the DRC, it occurred repeatedly. For

example, although a UN report of March 1999 estimated MONUC would need more than 100,000 troops, it was granted fewer than 6,000.[78] Similarly, in October 2004, UN Security Council Resolution 1565 granted MONUC only 5,900 of the 13,100 additional troops it had requested, including denying the mission a brigade planned for the south-eastern part of the country.[79] And again in 2006, the EUFOR RD force was deployed temporarily to the DRC in support of MONUC because the Security Council had declined the UN Secretary-General's request that MONUC be given an additional 2,590 troops to deal with security contingencies during the elections.[80]

An additional dimension to this problem was what the UN called ‘vacation rates’, i.e. the gap between the number of authorized and deployed personnel. In the worst cases, such as UNAMID and AMISOM, the mission took years to reach its authorized deployment strength. Police officers, especially French-speakers, were in particularly high demand. A second problem has been generating reinforcements or ‘surge’ capacities for particular missions in response to unexpected crises. This was a particular problem for both MONUC in November 2008, when rebels threatened to overrun Goma, and in December 2013, when UNMISS struggled to cope with the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan. A third challenge related to the lack of key military enablers, including armoured vehicles, helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, ISR capabilities (including UAVs), engineers, logistics, and medical units, and in some cases, special forces.

Today's peacekeepers continue to suffer from a similar range of capability gaps. Assets that can enable rapid deployment of peacekeepers within 30–90 days are particularly important. Beyond logistics and transportation (airlift and ground) capabilities, this would include engineering companies that could erect camps and infrastructure (including for hospitals and aviation), as well as working airfields. Once deployed, many missions continued to lack suitable mobility, information-gathering and medical units. In some theatres, most notably Mali, there was also a growing need for counter-IED capabilities.[81]

Misconduct

Misconduct in peace operations has assumed various forms. In extreme cases, UN peacekeepers have murdered local civilians: by deliberate torture, as in the case of Canadian troops in Somalia in the early 1990s, or through indirect fire incidents as in AMISOM in Somalia.[82] The more common problems involved the local perception that peacekeepers were unaccountable and immune from the law, corruption, and the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of local civilians. These issues were important because such misconduct could ‘put an entire operation at risk, severely hampering its ability to effect positive change in the host country’.[83]

It was corruption and SEA which grabbed the media headlines. Corruption came in a variety of forms, but among the most prominent examples in recent years were UN peacekeepers in the DRC illicitly dealing in gold and other conflict trade goods, including arms, and AU peacekeepers in Somalia engaging in arms trafficking.[84] In the DRC case, the allegations against Indian peacekeepers in particular apparently prompted Kabila's government to tell the UN Secretary-General that they should not be deployed to some parts of the country. This warning came in November 2008, just after the Indian government had offered to provide half (1,500) of the temporary reinforcements authorized for MONUC by the UN Security Council.[85]

In relation to SEA, there were numerous scandals involving peacekeepers raping and sexually abusing local women and children, as well as engaging in human trafficking. Although such abuses occurred in peace operations all around the world, peacekeepers in DRC, Liberia and Sudan/South Sudan were accused of most abuses. In 2004 the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted an investigation into the situation around Bunia in eastern DRC, which concluded that the SEA of locals by peacekeepers was a regular occurrence and that MONUC management had turned a blind eye to the problem.[86] The positive news was that these scandals prompted a major UN investigation into the issue, led by Jordan's Prince Zeid, and the subsequent setting out of the so-called zero tolerance approach.[87]

Despite an overall downward trend since 2009, SEA allegations against peacekeepers persist. There was also renewed debate about the extent of

such abuse. Contrary to UN official estimates based on recorded allegations, which suggested a relatively small proportion of UN peacekeepers engaged in such activities, a survey of women conducted in Liberia in 2012 suggested ‘that about 58,000 women ages 18–30 in 2012 had engaged in transactional sex with UN personnel at some point’.[88] After the latest round of such scandals involving the UN mission and French and African peacekeepers in CAR, a civil society group called Aids Free World launched the ‘Code Blue campaign’ in May 2015 to remove any possibility of immunity for peacekeepers when they are accused of SEA and to create an independent, external Commission of Inquiry, with full access to the UN as well as subpoena power, to examine SEA in peacekeeping operations.[89]

An alternative, and probably more effective option, would be to pressure member states to hold their personnel accountable for such crimes.

Conclusion

Peacekeepers did not change the nature of African wars. Nor did they fundamentally alter the political dynamics in what de Waal called Africa's ‘political marketplace’ (discussed in chapter 9). But they did help alleviate some of its worst symptoms, and they did this in spite of being given unrealistic deadlines and being starved of adequate resources and personnel. To be clear, Africa did not suffer from a lack of peacekeepers in absolute terms. The problem was that there were far too few peacekeepers relative to the complexity and magnitude of the tasks at hand.

Peacekeepers also suffered from the fact that their missions were not always tied to a viable conflict resolution strategy. Two particular weaknesses were the inability of most peacekeeping operations to tackle the local-level dynamics which lay at the heart of many of Africa's wars and their overly optimistic faith in the ability of power-sharing agreements and elections to usher in an era of stable peace. In one of the more thoughtful critiques of the MONUC operation, Séverine Autesserre observed how the mission's leaders relied too heavily on elections when they were ‘a poor peacebuilding mechanism’ and ended up framing ‘local conflict resolution as an irrelevant, inappropriate, and illegitimate task for international actors’, when in actual fact it was crucial to implementing peace agreements.[90] These conclusions could reasonably be levelled at many other operations as

well. But it is important to recall that peacekeepers do not write their own mandates. Rather, they receive their instructions from diplomats in New York, Addis Ababa and elsewhere and this is where the primary criticism should fall.

It was also apparent that no single organization could handle the full spectrum of conflict management challenges facing the continent. Consequently, ‘partnership peacekeeping’ became the continental norm and how to ensure strategic coordination between the actors involved became one of its principal headaches. During the 1990s the key relationships were between Africa's regional organizations and the UN. In the twenty-first century, however, the locus shifted to the crucial UN–AU–EU nexus, as the latter two organizations began to play larger roles in peacekeeping on the continent. In both decades, the US and France played particularly important bilateral roles. So too did the notion of ‘African solutions to African problems’, which was a prominent but not always helpful fixture in international debates.

In more positive terms, the post-Cold War era witnessed an unprecedented improvement in the professionalization of the world's peacekeepers and (as detailed in chapter 8) the institutionalization of Africa's conflict management structures. Although some big problems remained, the UN missions established in the early twenty-first century reflected a qualitatively different order of professionalization than those established in the early 1990s. Similarly, although the AU tried to run before it could walk in the field of peacekeeping, it also made considerable progress, especially when considering the low baseline and the lack of interest displayed in peacekeeping by many of its members.

Finally, it is important to remember that even ‘robust’ peace operations with mandates to use force were not designed for war-fighting against determined adversaries. Their purpose was not to achieve victory over particular enemies but impartially to uphold the principles and rules written into their mandate and the peace agreement concerned. When belligerents were genuinely committed to the peace process, peacekeepers helped make it stick.[91] When belligerents remained belligerent, peacekeepers could do little but help alleviate some of the symptoms of war. When forced into such situations, peacekeepers predictably drew hostility from all sides: governments complained they didn't disarm rebels; rebels complained they

ignored government abuses; and civilians complained that they didn't protect them. In sum, the overriding conclusion from peacekeeping in post-Cold War Africa is that, when groups wanted to fight, under-resourced peacekeepers were rarely able to stop them.

Notes

1 See Bellamy and Williams, ‘Trends in peace operations’. A list of peace operations in Africa since 1990 is provided in the Appendix.

2 See Bellamy and Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, chaps 4–5 and Koops et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook*.

3 Benner, Mergenthaler and Rotmann, *The New World*.

4 See Berman and Sams, *Peacekeeping*, chap. 3.

5 For overviews of these activities, see ibid, chaps 4–7; Boulden, *Dealing with Conflict*; Coleman, *International Organisations*, chaps 3–5.

6 Boulden, ‘UN Security Council’.

7 Khadiagala, ‘Burundi’, p. 218.

8 Boulden, ‘UN Security Council’, p. 29.

9 Coleman, *International Organisations*, chaps 3–5.

10 For details, see ibid., chaps 4–5; Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, chap. 4; Adebajo, *Building Peace*.

11 See Ellis, *The Mask*, p. 173; Howe, *Ambiguous Order*, chap. 4; Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War*.

12 This operation also cost Nigeria an estimated $5 billion and the lives of some 500 troops. Malan, ‘Africa’, p. 91.

13 For details, see Bellamy and Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, chap. 4.

14 See Melvern, *A People Betrayed*; Dallaire, *Shake Hands*.

15 US Presidential Decision Directive 25 determined that peacekeeping operations should be authorized only when there was a genuine threat to peace and security; regional or sub-regional organizations could assist in resolving the situation; a ceasefire existed and the parties had committed themselves to a peace process; a clear political goal existed and was present in the mandate; a precise mandate had been formulated; and the safety of UN personnel could be reasonably assured.

16 Goulding, *Peacemonger*, p. 217.

17 Cited in Susan E. Rice, 'Why Darfur can't be left to Africa', *Washington Post*, 7 August 2005.

18 Cited in Williams, 'Keeping the peace', p. 311.

19 Tony Blair, May 2007, cited ibid, p. 311. Interestingly, between 2004 and 2007 the AU's Peace Fund received between $109 and $183 million per year, less than 2 per cent of which were contributions from AU member states. Franke, *Security Cooperation*, p. 146.

20 For a critique of this idea, see Williams, 'Keeping the peace'.

21 For a more general defence of pluralism, see Jackson, *The Global Covenant*.

22 IISS, *Strategic Survey 1996/97*, p. 223.

23 Commission for Africa, *Our Common Interest*, p. 167.

24 Williams, 'Fighting for Freetown'.

25 See Bellamy and Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, chap. 5.

26 Jones et al., *Building on Brahimi*, p. 2.

27 For an overview see Koops et al. (eds), *The Oxford Handbook*.

28 This section draws heavily from Williams, 'United Nations'.

29 Spoilers are 'leaders and parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, and interests, and use

violence to undermine attempts to achieve it'. Stedman, 'Spoiler problems', p. 5.

30 Downs and Stedman, 'Evaluation issues', pp. 55–9.

31 Ibid., pp. 44, 58, 65–6.

32 The UN's philosophy is that 'peacekeeping' is unlikely to succeed where one or more of the following conditions are not in place: (1) a peace to keep, where the signing of a ceasefire or peace agreement is one (but not the only) important indicator that parties are genuinely seeking peace; (2) positive regional engagement; (3) full backing of a united Security Council; and (4) a clear and achievable mandate with resources to match. UN, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, pp. 49–51.

33 See, for example, UNEP-MONUSCO-OSESG, *Experts' background report*.

34 See Kemp, Shaw and Boutellis, *The Elephant in the Room*.

35 To my knowledge, the UN first adopted this phrase in the UN Secretary-General's report *Partnering for Peace*.

36 UN doc. S/2015/229, p. 2.

37 See Jones, 'The challenges'.

38 Most of the training was done in Africa's peacekeeping training institutes, including in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Ghana. They were funded almost entirely by external donors (and often staffed by seconded foreign personnel). In addition, in 2008, one respected analyst concluded that none of them was really worthy of the label 'centre of excellence'. For details, see Malan, 'Africa', pp. 103–7.

39 For overviews of this partnership and suggestions to improve it, see Boutellis and Williams, *Peace Operations* and Williams and Dersso, *Saving Strangers*.

40 See UN doc. S/2015/3, 5 January 2015.

41 UN Security Council resolution 1890 (16 January 2009).

42 See UN docs A/63/666–S/2008/813, 31 December 2008 and A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015.

43 Durch and England, *The Purposes*.

44 For a discussion see Karlsrud, ‘The UN at war’.

45 Formed in 2013, the brigade comprised three battalions from Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania. It was used primarily to attack the M-23 rebel group. The language is from UN Security Council Resolution 2098 (28 March 2013), para. 12b.

46 For an overview, see Findlay, *The Use of Force*.

47 ‘Principles of UN Peacekeeping’, at http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/principles.shtml.

48 For a critique of ‘robust peacekeeping’ by the UN, see Thardy, ‘A critique’.

49 A position endorsed by the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations, UN doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, para. 118.

50 Ibid., para. 122.

51 Ibid., para. 119.

52 Ibid., para. 107.

53 UN doc. S.PV/6153 (Resumption 1), 29 June 2009, p. 13.

54 Ibid., p. 3.

55 Letter from Dallaire to Col. Nazrul Islam, 17 April 1994, p. 1. Copy in author's possession.

56 Code cable, ‘The military assessment of the situation as of 17 April 1994’, para. 17. Copy in author's possession. See also Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, p. 187.

57 Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, pp. 194–5.

58 HRW, *‘You Will be Punished’*, p. 141.

59 UN doc. A/55/305–S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

60 Specifically, ‘the mission should be given an initial mandate with an overall political goal, a limited number of initial priority tasks and an explicit planning mandate that requests the Secretary-General to return within six months with a proposal for sequenced activities based on a limited number of achievable benchmarks for mission performance.’ UN doc. A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, para. 184.

61 For more details, see Holt, Taylor and Kelly, *Protecting Civilians*; Williams, *Enhancing Civilian Protection*.

62 See UN docs S/1999/1257, 16 December 1999, A/54/549, 15 November 1999, and A/55/305–S/2000/809, 21 August 2000.

63 OAU, *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide*.

64 See UN doc. A/68/787, 7 March 2014.

65 *Civilians Seeking Protection at UNMISS Bases* (UNMISS internal document, 30 April 2013).

66 Author's interview with senior MONUSCO official, Goma, 31 May 2015.

67 See, for example, Security Council Resolution 2155, 27 May 2014, which set out the revised mandate for UNMISS.

68 UN, *Draft DPKO/DFS Operational Concept* and UN, *Protection of Civilians*.

69 Through the use of such mechanisms as Joint Protection Teams (JPTs), Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) and Community Alert Networks (CANs).

70 Hultman, Kathman and Shannon, ‘United Nations peacekeeping’.

71 Holt and Berkman, *The Impossible Mandate?*, pp. 160–1.

72 Ibid., p. 166.

73 Des Forges, *Leave None*, p. 689. The difficulty with this figure is that many of these people were located within the RPF zone. Consequently, the extent to which UNAMIR was responsible for saving them is not entirely clear.

74 Holt et al., *Protecting Civilians*, pp. 12, 211.

75 The exceptions have come in the absence of a host government (Somalia, 1992) and if one classifies humanitarian military interventions as peace operations (as in Libya, 2011).

76 Jones, Gowan and Sherman, *Building on Brahimi*, p. 12.

77 For example, Thabo Mbeki, 'What the world got wrong in Côte d'Ivoire', *Foreign Policy*, 29 April 2011, http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/04/29/what-the-world-got-wrong-in-cote-divoire/ and Cunliffe, *Legions of Peace*, pp. 57–9, who accused UN peacekeepers of overthrowing not just Gbagbo's regime, but also of earlier examples of forcible regime change in Sierra Leone and Namibia.

78 Cited in Roessler and Prendergast, 'Democratic Republic of the Congo', p. 259.

79 Ibid., p. 256.

80 Tull, 'Peacekeeping', p. 218.

81 Author's interview, UN official, Washington, DC, 17 June 2015.

82 See, for example, Razack, *Dark Threats* and Williams, 'The African Union mission', pp. 8–10.

83 Wiharta, 'The legitimacy', p. 115.

84 UN Security Council, *Report of the Monitoring Group*.

85 Wiharta, 'The legitimacy', p. 113.

86 UN, *Investigation*.

87 UN Secretary-General, *Special Measures*.

88 Bernd Beber, Michael Gilligan, Jenny Guardado and Sabrina Karim, ‘UN peacekeeping and transactional sex’, *The Monkey Cage*, 16 June 2015, http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/06/16/u-n-peacekeeping-and-transactional-sex/. See also OIOS, *Evaluation*.

89 www.codebluecampaign.com.

90 Autesserre, ‘Hobbes’, pp. 272, 276.

91 See Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?*

Chapter Eleven
Aid

The final international response to Africa's wars discussed here was the provision of aid. Sometimes this came as part of an overall political strategy to end the conflict; often it did not. It arrived in two principal varieties delivered through both bilateral and multilateral channels: humanitarian relief, which claimed to focus on the alleviation of human suffering caused by war and displacement; and development assistance, which claimed to promote sustainable prosperity as a longer-term antidote to the risk of armed conflict breaking out. Both varieties of aid faced the same fundamental challenge: the dirty politics that characterized Africa's war zones. For relief agencies, the central conundrum was how to ensure that assistance made it to the genuine victims of the conflict when the belligerents had little respect for humanitarian principles, and how it could be used to encourage an end to the political problems that had generated the crisis in the first place. For development actors, the challenge was how to help a state develop when the regime in question did not want genuinely national development or particularly liberal governance structures.

As funding for both sets of activities increased, but the wars and underdevelopment persisted, critics frequently argued that these instruments were not delivering the promised results. In addition, humanitarian organizations were accused of facilitating population transfers, of fuelling war economies, and of being opaque, selfish and ineffective. For their part, development actors were criticized for imposing upon Africa's weak states neoliberal policies which exacerbated instability rather than consolidated peace and, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, for supporting the Western security agenda to contain threats (and populations) within the global South.

This chapter examines both forms of aid – humanitarian and developmental – in turn. The basic argument is that neither instrument was able to overcome the challenges posed by regime (and rebel) strategies which chose to ignore the laws of war and sought to use aid to bolster their own legitimacy and grease their patronage networks. As such, humanitarian

assistance and development policies in Africa's conflict zones were rarely tied to effective conflict resolution strategies.

Humanitarian Assistance in Africa's Wars

In post-Cold War Africa, most humanitarian assistance (emergency food aid, water provision, medical care, shelter, etc.) was provided by what Alex de Waal called the ‘humanitarian international – the transnational elite of relief workers, aid-dispensing civil servants, academics, journalists and others, and the institutions they work for’.[1] In financial terms, the 1990s was a boom period for these actors. Between 1990 and 2000, official humanitarian aid increased from approximately $2.1 billion to $5.9 billion.[2] This was largely down to the policies of a small group of governments which by the late 1990s accounted for around 90 per cent of this figure (the US being the largest, along with Canada, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK).[3] These official sources were supplemented by a significant amount of charitable donations given to an increasing variety of NGOs. Indeed, it was notable that during the 1990s governments began disbursing greater proportions of their humanitarian relief via NGOs. In some cases, organizations received so much of their funding from governments that it became reasonable to ask whether they remained truly *non*-governmental organizations.[4] Even with such subcontracting, however, a significant degree of centralization remained, with six or seven major families of NGOs managing approximately $2.5 to $3 billion, equivalent to roughly 45 to 55 per cent of global humanitarian assistance in 2001.[5]

Despite this relatively small circle of actors, the humanitarian international was certainly not a homogeneous entity. As Thomas Weiss observed, although these actors agreed that alleviating suffering was the principal objective of the humanitarian enterprise, they disagreed over how best to do this in practice.[6] To highlight their differences, Weiss developed a spectrum of humanitarian action along which he identified four ideal types of humanitarian engagement (see figure 11.1).

	Classicists ↔ Minimalists ↔ Maximalists ↔ Solidarists		
Engagement with political authorities	Eschew public confrontations	↔	Advocate controversial public policy
Neutrality	Avoid taking sides	↔	Take the side of selected victims
Impartiality	Deliver aid using proportionality and non-discrimination	↔	Skew the balance of resource allocation
Consent	Pursue as sine qua non	↔	Override sovereignty as necessary

Figure 11.1 The political spectrum of humanitarians and their attitudes toward traditional operating principles

Source: Weiss, 'Principles', p. 4.

At one end were the 'classicists'. Led by the ICRC, they believed humanitarianism could and should be insulated from politics. The other three ideal types were variants of what Weiss called 'political humanitarians', such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Oxfam. They all believed that politics and humanitarianism 'could not and should not be disassociated' and that humanitarian action should form part of some international public policy to resolve or manage conflict and promote long-term development. The underlying assumption of this view was aptly summarized by the president of MSF-France in the following manner:

> humanitarian action is primarily addressed to those whose right to exist clashes with the indifference or overt hostility of others. It is intended to reach those who are being robbed of life by violence and extreme privation. Consequently, if humanitarian action is to be consistent, it will inevitably clash with the established order. Its subversive dimension becomes apparent when it moves beyond an analysis of material needs and exposes the processes of discrimination that produce victims and prevent efficient protection and assistance programs from being established.[7]

In Weiss's schema, the groups who shared this broad orientation diverged into the 'minimalists', whose aim was to engage in political action, but only if it would 'do no harm'; the 'maximalists', who had a more ambitious agenda of employing humanitarian action as part of a comprehensive strategy to transform conflict; and the 'solidarists', who explicitly chose

sides and abandoned any pretense of neutrality and impartiality. Although Weiss believed that the classicists' aspiration of apolitical humanitarianism was a chimera, he noted that the political humanitarians also faced a range of practical challenges which meant their own efforts did not always result in better policies or results. 'Under the right circumstances', he concluded,

> the maximalist approach could be viewed as an opportunity to address the roots of violence rather than place emergency Band-Aids, however well funded and effective, on wounds. Nonetheless, some of the more grandiose claims of maximalists should lead to extreme skepticism: there literally is no space for conflict resolution or development activities when deep insecurity prevails. In the darkest moments of civil war, only emergency relief efforts are plausible, and even these are often under siege.[8]

All these different perspectives were evident in the many attempts to provide humanitarian assistance in Africa's war zones. Along the way, the humanitarian international faced a variety of challenges.

One fundamental challenge was that (legally) delivering aid in a war zone required the consent of the host government. As a consequence, the provision of humanitarian relief was usually conducted on terms which supported the incumbent regime and its political strategies. In some cases it did this literally, as in Operation Lifeline Sudan, where not only did the government retain an effective veto over where aid could be delivered but in the early 1990s several besieged government garrison towns (including Juba, Terakeka and Kapoeta) were saved by resources they received from relief airlifts.[9] Aid agencies also bought into the government of Sudan's concept of 'peace villages', even though these were barely concealed attempts to control displaced southern Sudanese and Nuba people and force them to work on farms owned by northerners.[10] In other cases it was the rebels who could dictate the terms, as was the case with the SPLM/A in southern Sudan.[11] It was also true in Liberia, where warlord Charles Taylor demanded that a tax of 15 per cent was to be paid (in cash or in kind) on all aid entering territory under his control.[12] In another widely publicized case, it was the genocidal apparatus of Rwanda's interim government encamped in eastern Zaire which controlled how relief supplies were used in the camps. Here, as Fiona Terry demonstrated, 'humanitarian aid, intended for

the victims, strengthened the power of the very people who had caused the tragedy'. Overall, 'the Rwandan refugee camps and the humanitarian aid therein guaranteed the survival of the genocidal force.'[13] More recently, in early 2011, *al-Shabaab*'s control of much of south-central Somalia posed major problems for relief agencies trying to deliver assistance to the victims of the ongoing war and the intensifying famine.[14]

A second key challenge was how to control the uses to which humanitarian assistance was put. The problem here was that relief supplies could be used by actors to pursue a variety of goals which did not necessarily involve alleviating the suffering of the conflict's most needy victims. As David Keen illustrated, the three principal sets of actors in this equation were external governments, the belligerent parties, and the aid organizations themselves. For the so-called donor governments, Keen noted how humanitarian assistance served a variety of functions: it helped in the pursuit of strategic foreign policy goals by strengthening friends and weakening opponents; its provision encouraged and even legitimized political inaction (see below); and it helped limit large population flows seeping too far beyond the conflict zone.[15] For the United States, the world's largest provider of emergency assistance, its 'war on terrorism' generated legislation which criminalized any provision of humanitarian assistance that supported actors designated as 'Foreign Terrorist Organizations'.[16] Specifically, if US-funded groups delivered humanitarian relief that provided material support to 'terrorist' organizations – either by falling into their hands or paying them tolls to gain access to affected populations – they could face prosecution.

Among the conflict parties and local players, humanitarian relief also served a variety of functions beyond alleviating suffering: it was used to protect resident populations, sometimes at the expense of the displaced, and it was incorporated into the economic and military agendas of these groups.[17] In the economic sphere, the appropriation of aid and the ability to charge fees for protecting relief and relief workers were particularly common practices in Africa. In Somalia, for example, various NGOs resorted to hiring armed guards to protect their facilities, personnel and aid convoys. MSF estimated that, between October and December 1991 alone, the organization paid Somali strongman Osman Ato some $60,000 (Terry estimates MSF paid a total of $400,000).[18] Similarly, the ICRC was paying

about 500 to 600 Somali gunmen $4 a day each for protection services, and this was in a situation where some 30,000 foreign peacekeeping troops were present in the country. Nevertheless, by 1994 the ICRC decided for security reasons to move all expatriate delegates to Nairobi.[19] In the military realm, aid was regularly consumed by fighters and their dependents, sold for arms, and used as a means to attract new recruits. Armed rebel groups were also quick to see the benefits of operating out of displacement/refugee camps. As Terry observed, these 'humanitarian sanctuaries' provided armed factions with three major advantages: since refugees have a protected status under international law, guerrillas benefited by mixing among them; sanctuaries attracted resources independent of the faction's patrons; and they provided mechanisms through which a guerrilla movement could control the civilian population and legitimize its leadership.[20]

With reference to the aid organizations themselves, Keen suggested that aspects of their organizational culture meant that their priorities did not always align with the provision of assistance to the most vulnerable. Here, along with the problems of using camps as the primary mechanisms for the delivery of aid, Keen identified the tendency for relief agencies to remain silent about abuses in order to maintain their access to certain areas; their inclination to chase funding, which often meant focusing on high-profile, media-accessible crises; and their propensity to suck bureaucratic capacity out of state institutions in crisis zones.[21] On occasion, NGOs were accused of corruption and hence depriving victims of resources. In the multi-donor evaluation of the Rwandan crisis, for instance, the team was unable even to locate one-third of the 170 NGOs registered, and $120 million of funds went unaccounted for.[22] More generally, corruption had become a significant problem across all forms of humanitarian operations, particularly those operating with conflict parties.[23]

Of these pathologies, it was the debate about the pros and cons of camps as a means of delivering effective assistance that captured most international attention. On the one hand, camps were *relatively* easy for the aid agencies to organize and monitor, and they were encouraged by nearby states because they could separate resident and displaced populations, attract international resources, and facilitate early repatriation. But, on the other hand, they presented a host of problems for the victims and opportunities for the belligerents. Not only could centralizing people in camps raise the

risk of infection and curtail the ability of the displaced to pursue economic strategies and other sources of livelihood, but it also provided armed groups with a concentrated pool of recruits and a ready-made series of mechanisms to organize the appropriation of relief supplies.[24]

In this context of competing agendas – none of which were entirely focused on providing assistance to the most needy – relief agencies usually faced the basic challenge of actually securing access to the real victims. In most of Africa's war zones, large swathes of territory existed where relief workers had no or limited access to suffering populations. In Angola, for example, even in the final stages of the war humanitarian organizations could operate only inside the ‘security perimeters’ drawn between 5 and 30 km around government-controlled towns, which left 80 to 90 per cent of the country beyond their reach.[25] In every case, access had to be negotiated with the host government, which, for the reasons noted above, often set tight parameters on where and when aid could be delivered. Even after deals were struck to gain access to rebel-held areas, aid agencies found themselves exposed to similar types of manipulation.

Operation Lifeline Sudan was the first example of this new concept of ‘negotiated access’. As part of the deal, the SPLA's humanitarian wing – the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA) – was given a role in evaluating needs as well as in organizing and distributing aid. Not surprisingly, it inflated the numbers of people requiring aid, misappropriated resources before distribution took place, and helped compel civilians to transport rations they had been issued with to SPLA warehouses. The SSRA was also alleged to have collaborated in simulating attacks to force relief workers to evacuate an area so that their supplies could be pillaged by SPLA troops.[26] Of course, relief agencies could have spoken out about what was happening under their noses, but many preferred not to reveal the sources of abuse in order to maintain their presence in certain areas. It was as if Operation Lifeline Sudan and the others like it became an end in themselves rather than a mechanism to address the causes behind the crisis.

Relief organizations were also faced with the challenge of how to deliver resources into a war zone without fuelling the conflict.[27] While an influx of humanitarian assistance – or indeed any resources – into a conflict zone

could not fail to have some effect on the war economy, the pertinent questions were how much effect and upon what? The issue of paying protection money and levies has already been noted above, but another mechanism through which relief agencies were said to fuel conflict was through goods being stolen by combatants. In Liberia in 1994, for example, aid organizations had more than $5 million worth of materials stolen. In clashes in Monrovia two years later, the figure rose to $20 million.[28] Yet criticism which depicted aid as a primary driver of Africa's war economies is not borne out by the evidence. As David Shearer observed, not only did the intensity of relief efforts commonly wax and wane with no discernible strategic impact on conflicts but, compared to the economic values generated by minerals, timber or oil, the impact of relief supplies was puny.[29] There was probably a direct connection between the fact that such critiques often focused on the role of aid in the conflicts in the Horn of Africa (including Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia), where mineral wealth and other forms of resources were minimal. Consequently, Fiona Terry offered a more sophisticated way of thinking about the impact of humanitarian aid when she concluded that its importance ‘to the war economy is likely to be proportional to the resource base of the warring parties’.[30]

Another major challenge facing relief workers was to ensure that their activities did not become a substitute for political action taken by powerful governments to address the underlying problems. This was what David Rieff called the ‘humanitarian alibi’ – ‘the misuse of the humanitarian idea and humanitarian workers by governments eager to do as little as possible in economically unpromising regions like sub-Saharan Africa’.[31] Of course, this risk of abuse was no reason to stop providing assistance, but it was grounds to think carefully about whether or not to engage in humanitarian assistance if it was not part of a coherent conflict management strategy. Here, organizations on the classical end of Weiss's spectrum, such as the ICRC, were much less likely to take a decision to disengage than those at the solidarist end, such as MSF. In 2013, for example, MSF decided to stop its medical aid programme in Somalia after 22 years of operations. It cited ‘abuse and manipulation of humanitarian action’ and ‘armed groups and civilian leadership support and tolerance of violent attacks against MSF’, which rendered it impossible to maintain the ‘minimum security guarantees needed to maintain assistance programmes’.[32] The logic behind this

concern was that studies of famine and ‘complex emergencies’ were in general agreement that people usually become victims because ‘they lack political clout within the institutions of their own society’.[33] Consequently, responding to what were essentially political crises with food, blankets and medicines instead of political strategies was a recipe for failure. Yet, as de Waal argued, ‘Western governments and donating publics [were too often] deluded into believing the fairy tale that their aid can solve profound political problems, when it cannot.’[34] Commenting on the record of the 1990s, Shearer observed that this is precisely what usually occurred: ‘major donors have substituted humanitarian aid for political action’, with the result ‘that civil wars are managed by dealing with their symptoms, not their causes’.[35] Terry reached a similar conclusion, arguing that, ironically, ‘humanitarian action in the post-Cold War period has been transformed from a tool with which governments pursue foreign policy objectives to a tool with which to avoid foreign policy engagement.’[36]

The final challenge for the humanitarian international discussed here was actually to solve the problems it was supposed to address. And these problems were considerable. In Hugo Slim's words, they were nothing less than ‘selling the idea of restraint and compassion in war’ in order to save its victims.[37] In one sense, of course, this was mission impossible, since, by definition, relief agencies were ‘only equipped to address the symptoms, and not the causes, of conflict’.[38] But, viewed another way, it did not matter that the agencies couldn't actually save the victims because, in the world of humanitarian aid, unlike the corporate world, it was not the satisfaction of the client that determined the financial viability of the humanitarian international; it was the satisfaction of the donors. And, in spite of all the problems, the donors appeared satisfied enough not to fundamentally alter the system.[39] This led Alex de Waal to make what was arguably the most damning verdict of the entire enterprise when he concluded, ‘Contemporary international humanitarianism works, but not for the famine-vulnerable people in Africa.’[40] At times, as the next section discusses, the same could be said for the international developmentalism.

International Development in Africa's Wars

While humanitarian assistance sought to alleviate the worst immediate symptoms of armed conflict, international development policies were part of a longer-term project which included reducing the risks of war. As with international humanitarianism, by the end of the Cold War international development was no longer a set of activities conducted by governments and international organizations but had become a process involving a wider set of actors both above and below the national level, among them regional authorities, transnational firms, NGOs and philanthropists.[41] Some analysts referred to this collection of entities as an international development business.[42] And it was a large business. According to OECD data, in the nine years from 2005 to 2013, donor governments and multilateral organizations had contributed an average of $46.7 billion of overseas development assistance to Africa each year, ranging from $35.8 billion in 2005 to $56 billion in 2013.[43]

Although officially their primary concerns were poverty alleviation and stimulating economic growth with equity, many advocates of development thought it was also a vital part of any long-term conflict prevention strategy, because it could reduce the risk of war recurrence in so-called post-conflict environments and the risk of war onset more generally. The logic was simple: since civil war was ‘overwhelmingly a phenomenon of low-income countries’, Africa's civil wars must have occurred in large part because the continent was poor.[44] And if poverty increased the risk of war, then development could provide an antidote.

In several respects, this was true. Within the relevant quantitative literature it was widely accepted ‘that high-income nations are less likely to experience civil wars than low-income nations.’[45] The literature specifically on Africa also concluded that the glut of civil wars between 1965 and 1999 was ‘because its economies have performed so poorly both absolutely and relative to other regions’.[46] This meant it was particularly worrying that in sub-Saharan Africa 92 million *more* people were living on less than $1.25 a day in 2005 than in 1990 (391 million compared with 299 million).[47] The second area of broad consensus was that reversals in levels of prosperity were dangerous.

By and large, statistics on African states compiled by the World Bank bear out these conclusions.[48] First, as table 11.1 demonstrates, 60 per cent of the twenty African states with the lowest GNI per capita in 1990 suffered from a state-based armed conflict or severe political instability during the 1990s. In the 2000s (until 2014) the figure rose to approximately 75 per cent.[49] In contrast, during the 1990s only about 30 per cent of the twenty African states with the highest GNI experienced such conflicts (see table 11.2). For the 2000s up until 2009, the figure was about 20 per cent. Notably, Algeria was the only state with a GNI per capita over $1,000 which suffered a state-based armed conflict between 1990 and 2009. This figure rose to nearly 28 per cent after the Arab uprisings of 2011, with Egypt and Libya both subsequently experiencing state-based armed conflict and PITF instability events.

Table 11.1 Armed conflict and instability in the twenty African states with the lowest GNI per capita, 1990 and 2000 (US$)

State	GNI per capita 1990	State-based armed conflict (UCDP) 1990s	PITF political instability episode 1990s	State	GNI per capita 2000	State-based armed conflict (UCDP) 2000s	PITF political instability episode 2000s
Somalia	130	Yes	Yes	Somalia	No data	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	170	Yes	Yes	DRC	90	Yes	Yes
Ethiopia	180	Yes	Yes	Burundi	110	Yes	Yes
Tanzania	180	No	No	Ethiopia	110	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	200	Yes	Yes	Liberia	130	Yes	Yes
Malawi	200	No	No	Sierra Leone	130	Yes	Yes
Burundi	220	Yes	Yes	Eritrea	180	Yes	No
Zaire	230	Yes	Yes	Guinea	180	Yes	Yes
Guinea	230	No	No	Niger	180	Yes	Yes
Madagascar	240	No	No	Malawi	170	No	No
Nigeria	270	Yes	No	Chad	200	Yes	Yes
Mali	270	Yes	Yes	Mozambique	210	Yes	No
Chad	280	Yes	Yes	Mali	230	Yes	No
Niger	310	Yes	Yes	Rwanda	240	Yes	Yes
Gambia	310	No	Yes	Burkina Faso	250	No	No
Burkina Faso	330	No	No	Madagascar	250	No	Yes
Uganda	340	Yes	Yes	Nigeria	270	Yes	Yes
Equatorial Guinea	350	No	No	Tanzania	270	No	No
Rwanda	370	Yes	Yes	CAR	280	Yes	Yes
Kenya	370	No	Yes	Uganda	280	Yes	Yes
		12/20	13/20			16/20	14/20

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators Database*, at http://data.worldbank.org/; UCDP at www.ucdp.uu.se; PITF at www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/PITF%20Consolidated%20Case%20List.pdf; Goldstone et al., 'A global forecasting model' (2010), pp. 205–6.

Table 11.2 Armed conflict and instability in the twenty African states with the highest GNI per capita, 1990 and 2000 (US$)

State	GNI per capita 1990	State-based armed conflict (UCDP) 1990s	PITF political instability episode 1990s	State	GNI per capita 2000	State-based armed conflict (UCDP) 2000s	PITF political instability episode 2000s
Libya	(1987) 6,170	No	No	Seychelles	7,310	No	No
Seychelles	5,050	No	No	Libya	No data	Yes	Yes
Gabon	4,900	No	No	Mauritius	3,730	No	No
South Africa	2,890	No	Yes	Gabon	3,190	No	No
Botswana	2,750	No	No	South Africa	3,060	No	No
Algeria	2,440	Yes	Yes	Botswana	3,040	No	No
Mauritius	2,320	No	No	Namibia	2,280	No	No
Namibia	1,800	No	No	Tunisia	2,080	No	No
Tunisia	1,430	No	No	Algeria	1,580	Yes	Yes
Swaziland	1,180	No	No	Egypt	1,490	Yes	Yes
Morocco	1,030	No	No	Swaziland	1,390	No	No
Congo	980	Yes	Yes	Cape Verde	1,320	No	No
Zimbabwe	920	No	No	Morocco	1,180	No	No
Cape Verde	880	No	No	Djibouti	880	Yes	No
Cameroon	870	Yes	No	Côte d'Ivoire	680	Yes	Yes
Egypt	810	No	Yes	Equatorial Guinea	680	No	No
Angola	800	Yes	Yes	Congo	600	Yes	No
Côte d'Ivoire	800	No	No	Cameroon	580	No	No
Senegal	720	Yes	Yes	Lesotho	550	No	No
Lesotho	610	Yes	Yes	Senegal	490	Yes	No
		6/20	7/20			7/20	4/20

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators Database*, at http://data.worldbank.org/; UCDP at www.ucdp.uu.se; PITF at www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/PITF%20Consolidated%20Case%20List.pdf; Goldstone et al., 'A global forecasting model' (2010), pp. 205–6.

Table 11.3 Armed conflict and instability in African states experiencing negative GNI per capita growth, 1980–2000 (US$)

	GNI per capita 1980	GNI per capita 2000	Reduction in GNI ($)	Reduction in GNI (%)	State-based armed conflict (UCDP) (1990–2014)	PITF political instability episode (1990–2014)
DRC	630	90	540	85.7	Yes	Yes
Liberia	530	130	400	75.5	Yes	Yes
Sierra Leone	380	130	250	65.8	Yes	Yes
Nigeria	780	270	510	65.4	Yes	Yes
Niger	430	180	250	58.1	Yes	Yes
Zimbabwe	960	450	510	53.1	No	No
Zambia	630	310	320	50.8	No	Yes
Burundi	220	110	110	50	Yes	Yes
Angola	(1987) 840	440	400	47.6	Yes	Yes
São Tomé and Príncipe	(1988) 530	290	240	45.2	No	No
Madagascar	450	250	200	44.4	No	Yes
Côte d'Ivoire	1,140	680	460	40.4	Yes	Yes
Togo	450	290	160	35.6	No	No
Gabon	4,820	3,190	1,630	33.8	No	No
Congo	880	600	280	31.8	Yes	Yes
Ethiopia	(1983) 150	110	40	26.7	Yes	Yes
Sudan	470	350	120	25.5	Yes	Yes
Mozambique	(1981) 280	210	70	25	Yes	Yes
Algeria	2,080	1,580	500	24	Yes	Yes
Mauritania	460	350	110	23.9	Yes	Yes
Ghana	430	330	100	23.3	No	No
Kenya	440	350	90	20.5	No	Yes
CAR	340	280	60	17.6	Yes	Yes
Chad	240	200	40	16.7	Yes	Yes
Mali	270	230	40	14.8	Yes	Yes
Burkina Faso	290	250	40	13.8	No	No
Gambia	380	340	40	10.5	No	Yes
Malawi	190	170	20	10.5	No	No
Senegal	530	490	40	7.5	Yes	Yes
Cameroon	620	580	40	6.5	Yes	No
Benin	410	390	20	4.9	No	No
Rwanda	250	240	10	4	Yes	Yes
Somalia	100	n/a	n/a	No data	Yes	Yes
Libya	10,460	(1987) 6,170	4,290	No data	Yes	Yes
					22/34	25/34

Sources: World Bank, *World Development Indicators Database*, at http://data.worldbank.org/; UCDP at www.ucdp.uu.se; Goldstone et al., 'A global forecasting model' (2010), pp. 205–6.

With regard to reversals, World Bank data on fifty-two African states shows that thirty-four had lower GNI per capita in 2000 than they did in 1980 (table 11.3). Of these, about 65 per cent experienced either a state-based armed conflict or an episode of severe political instability between 1990 and 2009. Since 2009, only Mauritania and Libya experienced new state-based armed conflicts, and only Libya underwent a new PITF instability event, changing the overall percentage to 69. In comparison, of the eighteen

African states that saw their GNI per capita increase between 1980 and 2000, about 39 per cent suffered in that way.

These figures suggest that economic wealth, and hence development policies did matter for issues of warfare and instability. But *how* did they matter and how much? Here, the quantitative literature is not helpful, and analysts need a more qualitative understanding of particular historical cases. Unlike most African conflicts, the relationship between development activities and Rwanda's civil war and genocide has generated some scholarly debate which is worth reviewing here.

When the civil war began in 1990, Rwanda had the eighteenth lowest GNI per capita on the continent. Between 1980 and 1990 its GNI per capita rose steadily, from $250 to $370, but its Human Development Index score dropped from 0.361 in 1985 to 0.325 in 1990. Thus, while Rwanda was certainly one of the world's poorest countries, there was mixed news in relation to whether it experienced a clear reduction in prosperity levels in the decade preceding the genocide. It is also an important case because, before the civil war erupted, international development actors were heavily invested in Rwanda. By the late 1980s there were approximately 200 donors in the country: some twenty bilateral ones, thirty multilateral ones and about 150 NGOs.[50] By 1991, they were dispensing over $600 million in aid to Rwanda.[51] According to one expert commentator, the country had become a ‘development dictatorship’.[52] The large international presence means it is indisputable that international development policies are part of the story of the genesis of the civil war and genocide. What is less certain is the nature of that part.

Some analysts argued that the main effect of the structural adjustment programmes was to erode the institutions of the Rwandan state, destroy economic activity, fuel unemployment and famine, and thus contribute to a political atmosphere in which genocide became possible.[53] Others have emphasized that such a view fundamentally misunderstands the central role of state power in conducting the genocide. Rwanda was not a weak state but a strong one which was turned on a segment of its own people. From this perspective, the challenge is to understand the ways (material and discursive) in which external agents of development supported ‘a repressive and ultimately genocidal state apparatus’.[54] As Peter Uvin put it, the

international development business provided a significant amount of the fuel that allowed ‘the government machinery to exist, to expand, to control, to implement’.[55] From this perspective, genocidal violence in Rwanda was rooted in the longstanding dynamics of exclusion, marginalization, inequality, frustration and racism, and, for a variety of reasons, international development policies had helped inflame rather than dampen these dynamics.[56]

The first point for the prosecution is that the Rwandan state was clearly behind the vast majority of human rights abuses and massacres that occurred during the early 1990s, and this was known to international development workers.[57] The international financial institutions (IFIs), however, continued to assume the government was a benevolent actor committed to national development, albeit in difficult circumstances. In Uvin's words, the aid industry ‘closed its eyes to the racist currents in society’.[58] Before 1990 the World Bank in particular developed close ties with the Rwandan government, largely because during the 1980s the country experienced a severe economic and social crisis made even worse by the 1986–7 falls in world coffee prices. The World Bank's own figures suggested foreign assistance accounted for over 70 per cent of public investment between 1982 and 1987, and the figure rose afterwards.[59] The Bank subsequently approved a structural adjustment credit (SAC) in June 1991, while the IMF accorded Rwanda a $41 million credit line to finance a three-year economic reform programme. Five World Bank supervision missions oversaw Rwanda's SAC between June 1991 and October 1993. In October 1993 the second tranche ($35 million) was refused because of managerial concerns about the SAC's implementation.[60] This second tranche was eventually cancelled in December 1994.

The basic problem seems to have been that, where the World Bank saw a benevolent state struggling to promote national development in adverse conditions, other observers saw an increasingly extreme regime deploying the machinery of state to retain its grip on power and destroy its political opponents in the face of an economic crisis and growing demands for political liberalization.[61] In the context of the civil war, and because of a lack of reliable information about the workings of the Rwandan state, the Bank had no way of preventing its funds being spent on military equipment.

Indeed, according to its own estimates, it was aware that the government's defence and administration spending rose from 45 per cent to 64 per cent of the budget between 1985 and 1992.[62] The dilemma facing the Bank was thus whether to continue supplying funds in the hope that at least some found their way to the health and education sectors or suspend the loan package entirely until the civil war had ended. Part of the problem was that, before the Arusha peace process, the Bank's only official channel of communication was the Habyarimana regime.[63]

From even this brief sketch, it is clear that issues of structural adjustment and development cannot be divorced from political issues of conflict (and in this case genocide). The frightening conclusion is that, whatever their intentions, development actors were caught up in the longstanding processes of exclusion, marginalization, inequality, frustration and racism that helped produce civil war and genocide in Rwanda. In Uvin's words, ‘the way *development* was defined, managed and implemented was a crucial element in the creation and evolution of many of the processes that led to genocide.’[64] This is clearly an extreme case, but it is not isolated: development actors were part of many conflict recipes across the continent.

After the Cold War, the principal instruments in these interactions were development assistance and debt relief. Debt relief was less directly connected to the politics of war than other forms of development assistance, so can be dealt with relatively briefly. According to UNCTAD, between 1970 and 2002, African countries borrowed $540 billion and repaid about $550 billion in principal and interest.[65] This heavy repayment burden was said to be severely stunting the continent's ability to develop. Hence, indirectly, debt relief became part of the project to reduce the risk of severe instability in Africa. Of course, relieving debt alone did not reduce poverty, although it could facilitate it. Nor did it alter terms of trade or other imbalances in the global economy which might also account for high poverty levels in Africa. Nevertheless, debt relief became an important part of Western governments’ rhetoric about aiding Africa, not least because it accounted for the lion's share of assistance that the G8 gave to the continent.[66]

Interestingly, the G8 adopted debt relief only after being nudged and cajoled into doing so by a coalition of civic associations from across the

globe, perhaps most notably the Jubilee 2000 Coalition, which formed in 1997 to push for the cancellation of all unpayable and ‘odious’ debts in all countries. International creditor institutions had first attempted to reschedule debt repayments over longer periods of time during the late 1980s, when it became clear that many debtors were in danger of defaulting. When this didn't work, they started to design mechanisms that would actually reduce the level of debt, including terms agreed by the G7 in Toronto (1988), Trinidad (1990) and Naples (1994).

In light of these initiatives, in 1996 the World Bank and IMF created the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. To be eligible, states had to have a low GNI per capita (c. <$1,000), have what the World Bank and IMF considered unsustainable levels of debt, have a World Bank and IMF programme, and follow a (potentially six-year) programme of reforms based on IMF criteria. If eligible countries completed the HIPC programme, they would get a reduction of their debts down to what the IFIs considered a sustainable level. Thus the HIPC did not involve cancelling all debts but was an attempt to reduce debt to a sustainable level. In 1999, however, the HIPC initiative was reformed, and in 2005, following the G8's focus on Africa at its Gleneagles summit, a new scheme was established called the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. This allowed countries that had reached the HIPC ‘completion point’ to receive cancellation of most of their debts (up to certain cut-off dates) to the IMF, African Development Fund and the World Bank. Debts accrued to other lenders (e.g. banks and private companies) were not part of these schemes. Progress on reaching the HIPC ‘completion point’ was slow, taking at least six years in most cases, which meant that the historic target of the millennium was missed. By 2006, however, twenty-two African states had completed the HIPC programme.[67] The biggest African beneficiaries were Tanzania and Uganda, which saw between $3.5 billion and $4 billion of their debts cancelled. Interestingly, Kampala persistently broke the terms of its various credit agreements by spending large amounts of money on its intervention in the DRC war.[68] By 2015, thirty African countries had passed their ‘completion point’ with three at the pre-decision point stage (Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan).

The missing giant in this equation was Nigeria, which did not qualify for HIPC status. By 2005, Nigeria had accumulated total external debts of about $36 billion, of which over $30 billion was owed to the Paris Club.

This translated into annual repayments of about $1.8 billion, nearly two-thirds of which went to four countries (Britain, France, Germany and Japan). After President Obasanjo assumed office and first indicated his willingness to consider a deal on debt relief, it took nearly seven years of wrangling – both between Nigeria and its creditors and among the creditors themselves – to produce a result.[69] In mid-2006 Nigeria completed a deal related to its Paris Club debt worth around $30 billion ($18 billion was cancelled and the remaining $12 billion was paid back upfront in two tranches). The Nigerian government duly satisfied its creditors that it had undertaken sufficient reform and managed to pay off the required portion of its debt upfront, largely because of the international context of high oil prices in 2005–6. The deal certainly made it harder for Nigeria's political elite to blame foreigners for their country's developmental problems. An economic assessment of the deal published in 2013 concluded that it had played a key role in Nigeria's improved economic performance.[70] As discussed in chapter 7, however, the Nigerian government did not use the benefits to address poverty and underdevelopment in the country's northeast, which helped facilitate the rise of Boko Haram during the same period.

While debt relief schemes were clearly a significant structural factor, the majority of attention during the post-Cold War period fell on the more traditional instrument of development assistance – i.e. using aid to boost long-term investment and growth and to reduce poverty. As noted above, according to OECD figures, such assistance to Africa totalled $56 billion in 2013. The rationale for such aid was that the world's poorest countries could not develop without it. Indeed, by the turn of the millennium it had become popular to talk of states being caught in ‘poverty traps’ – defined by Jeffrey Sachs as a ‘condition, seemingly paradoxical, in which a poor country is simply too poor to achieve sustained economic growth’.[71] These countries were said to have no hope without external aid. In contrast to this view, the case of Somaliland since 1991 is instructive, because it demonstrates that a political community trapped in one of the world's poorest and conflict-ridden countries could achieve significant levels of development (and democratic governance) without the benefits of juridical sovereignty and the financial rewards that come with it.[72]

The story of international aid policies in Africa during this period is broadly one of a shift from various forms of conditionality to various forms of selectivity. Conditionality strategies were based on the idea that development loans and assistance would come with various conditions attached – i.e. aid would be given if potential recipients promised to do certain 'good' things, such as reform their economy. The most important example was the structural adjustment programmes implemented by the World Bank and IMF.[73] Between 1980 and 1989, some thirty-six countries in sub-Saharan Africa took out a total of 241 loans from the IFIs.[74] By the end of the Cold War, there were growing calls for various 'political conditionalities' to be implemented alongside the prescribed economic medicine, including greater concern for human rights, democracy – conceived in liberal terms – and 'good governance' (see also chapter 9).[75] As Christopher Clapham noted, the resulting adjustment packages were promoted by a broad alliance of actors:

> international financial institutions, seeking to bring about the capitalist transformation of African economies; Western governments, flexing their diplomatic muscles in the aftermath of the Cold War; Western public opinions, outraged at the brutality and corruption of at least a significant number of African regimes; and finally, at least vicariously, the African publics who were vociferously demonstrating their own discontent with the existing order.[76]

In relation to armed conflict, the central debate in the 1990s revolved around whether neoliberal adjustment packages should be pushed through in the immediate aftermath of war. Interestingly, reflecting specifically on the African experience during the mid-1990s, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that neoliberal adjustments could be highly detrimental to states struggling to make the transition from war to peace. 'Conflict prevention including post-conflict peace-building', Annan argued,

> may require an urgent infusion of funds to support a fragile State during a delicate political transition. It is particularly necessary to avoid situations in which conditionalities are imposed that are antithetical to a peace process, or in which international financial institutions and the donor community cut off funds from a weak Government making, in good faith, a popularly supported effort to pursue reconciliation or implement peace agreements. Where economic reform is needed it is necessary to consider how best to provide for a 'peace-friendly' structural adjustment programme while easing the conditionality that normally accompanies loans from the [IFIs].[77]

Annan's concerns were part of a broader set of critiques about the problems of the liberal peacebuilding agenda. Here, the central argument was that, in the aftermath of armed conflict, international attempts to turn war-torn states into market democracies too quickly and on the cheap could have seriously destabilizing effects which significantly increased the risk of war recurrence.[78]

Selectivity strategies, on the other hand, were about offering aid to reward 'good' performance. Here, donors waited until *after* potential beneficiaries had altered their policies and then selected recipients on the basis of performance. A good example of this approach was the US government's Millennium Challenge Account. Announced in March 2002, this was the first major new US bilateral aid initiative in over forty years, whereby funds were to be allocated only to countries that 'rule justly, invest in their people, and encourage economic freedom'.[79] In January 2004, the US Congress changed this initiative into the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Selective approaches such as the MCC were increasingly camouflaged by the language of 'partnership' and 'local ownership'. But they were basically rather transparent ways of making sure donors put their money where they wanted rather than simply focusing on the poorest countries. The biggest headaches thus came for actors who claimed to allocate aid on the basis of needs but had to justify why they were assisting the continent's better performers rather than its poorest countries.[80] The other main problem was one of international coordination, inasmuch as the world's donors were not all selective in the same manner.[81]

Reflecting on the lessons of several decades of development assistance, analysts agreed that aid was neither a magic bullet nor a fool's errand; used wisely it could reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth, but usually only in ‘good’ policy environments.[82] This left donors with the conundrum of how to alleviate poverty in Africa's many ‘bad’ policy environments – situations of warfare being one of those environments, but also states with authoritarian and/or corrupt regimes. It meant that, for aid to achieve poverty reduction, donors had to ‘take much more careful account of the local political dynamics that undermine development in the poorest countries’.[83]

Unfortunately, this rarely happened in post-Cold War Africa. For one thing, most aid still went into states with ‘bad’ policy environments. In their study of the practices of thirty-one bilateral and seventeen multilateral development agencies between 1972 and 2004, Easterly and Pfutze demonstrated that a preponderance of aid went to corrupt and authoritarian countries and to countries other than those with the lowest incomes. Based on Freedom House's categories[84] of unfree, partly free and free, they concluded:

> Unfree countries have retained about a third of aid, while around 80 per cent of aid goes to countries either partly free or unfree. These proportions have not changed much over time, despite democratization throughout the world and much donor rhetoric about promoting democracy. The only substantial movement can be found in the early 1990s, when the share going to unfree countries first dropped to about 20 per cent, then increased to almost 50 per cent, and then slowly fell back to its historic level of about 30 per cent. This pattern occurs because countries essentially hand out aid to the same countries year after year, but the countries themselves have shifted their status from unfree to free and back to unfree. To put it another way, donor agencies appear to be unresponsive to political changes in recipient countries. Only in the last couple of years before 2004 is there a change in the share going to unfree countries that is explained by a change in donor behavior – and this change is in the wrong direction.[85]

Perhaps more than any other indicator, these trends showed that donor governments persistently ignored the considerable evidence that aid did not

work in ‘bad’ policy environments. This suggests that factors other than poverty alleviation were driving the allocation of aid budgets in most Western governments. This was certainly the case for some non-Western governments, such as China, which explicitly defined development aid as a political mechanism to enhance its influence abroad.[86]

The second persistent problem was the tendency of Western governments to argue that alleviating poverty in Africa required lots more aid. This was exemplified by Tony Blair's Commission for Africa (2004–5), which called for international society, especially the G8, to provide Africa with a massive increase in aid, debt relief, trade and investment – an additional $75 billion of resources by 2010 – as the primary means of stimulating economic development. What was required, the Commission argued, was ‘a big push on many fronts at once’.[87] The problem with the ‘big aid’ approach was that it completely ignored both the history of aid allocations (noted above) and political incentives for elites in Africa's neopatrimonial states. As Richard Dowden observed, ‘Africa has had around a trillion dollars in aid in the last 50 years, roughly $5,000 for every African living today if distributed evenly at today's prices. If aid were the solution to Africa's problems, it would be a rich continent by now.’[88] Another estimate noted that aid to Africa increased

> by an astounding annual average of 5 per cent in real terms between 1970 and 1995 … At their peak, the Marshall Plan resources accounted for some 2.5 per cent of the GDP of countries like France and Germany. By 1996, excluding South Africa and Nigeria, the average African country received the equivalent of 12.3 per cent of its GDP in ODA, an international transfer … unprecedented in historical terms.[89]

In sum, Africa's principal problem was not a lack of aid but a lack of genuine political reform. And yet, despite continually pointing out that governance was the key to Africa's development equation, Blair's Commission failed to outline a strategy for how to reform the continent's neopatrimonial states. Unfortunately, they completely ignored the work of analysts such as William Reno, who had shown how, in several West African countries, attempts to transplant neoliberal policies into neopatrimonial states produced some rather counter-productive, unintended and distinctly illiberal effects. As well as providing a lifeline for various

corrupt patronage systems, the emphasis on privatization, deregulation and integration into the global economy actually encouraged leaders of Africa's neopatrimonial states to dismantle them further.[90] Instead of addressing such problems head on, donors turned instead to schemes based on selectively rewarding Africa's good performers.

The main framework in which this was done was the OECD's Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005).[91] This reiterated that aid was likely to be effective only if it was based on the principles of country ownership, alignment, harmonization and mutual accountability.[92] The basic idea was that recipient states should propose programmes for donors to fund and that donors should harmonize their policies to reduce transaction costs. In other words, it advocated a selective approach favouring the most capable governments which had put forward approved programmes. It also suggested that aid should increasingly come in the form of budget support through the recipient state's own public finance and budgetary systems rather than through externally managed discrete projects (discussed below). Aid should thus be used to support well-meaning but struggling governments stuck in what Sachs had called the ‘poverty trap’. In 2008, this approach was reiterated by an even larger number of states in the Accra Agenda for Action. The two main problems were, first, that most of Africa's stagnant low-income countries were not so virtuous; they were usually rather authoritarian and had no track record of struggling to achieve genuinely national development.[93] And second, the donors sometimes refused to follow their own principles. As the OECD's own assessment of this agenda put it, ‘partner country authorities appear to have gone further in implementing their commitments under the Paris Declaration than donors’.[94]

The other important and often divisive issue was budget support as a means of aid delivery. For the UK, one of the strongest advocates of budget support, this approach had several attractions.[95] First, it was based on the notion of partnerships between donor and recipient rather than donor-imposed conditions. Second, it was an efficient form of lending because it reduced transactions costs. Third, when administered selectively it was viewed as supporting those states which had adopted ‘good governance’ reforms.[96]

Of course, when aid was deposited directly into the coffers of the recipient government, local financial accountability was crucial. As Joel Barkan correctly observed, budget support amounted to ‘an expression of trust’ on the part of the donor government that the recipient regime would live up to its stated objectives with regard to poverty reduction and financial accountability.[97] Thus, when recipient governments held up their end of the bargain, budget support could be an efficient and effective means of aid delivery and building local capacity. However, it was also susceptible to a number of limitations and problems. First, although promising macro-economic conditions are an important part of ensuring poverty alleviation, they are not sufficient on their own and thus could not guarantee poverty reduction. Second, especially when aid represented a significant proportion of the recipient's GDP, such support could perpetuate aid dependency by reducing incentives for the recipient regime to generate other sources of revenue such as through local taxation. The third and arguably most fundamental problem occurred when the recipient regime betrayed donor trust by reneging on its promises. When this occurred, budget support programmes were left hostage to the local political context.[98]

It was through these mechanisms that budget support helped sustain bad governance in several states. In Uganda, for example, British budget support helped facilitate President Museveni's gradual roll-back of democracy when, in 2005, he repealed the ban on a third elected term in office for the president. That same year Britain was put in a similarly awkward position when Meles Zenawi's regime in Ethiopia killed approximately 200 people and imprisoned thousands more in the aftermath of the country's fraudulent elections. It was particularly bad timing for Britain because Meles was at the time a member of Blair's Commission for Africa and pontificating about the importance of good governance. By 2011–12, the UK had stopped its general budget support for Ethiopia but not Uganda.

Conclusion

Although both the humanitarian international and the international development business grew considerably after the Cold War, even on their own terms neither of them provided an effective response to the problems

of war and underdevelopment in Africa. With regard to development, several points are worth making. First, the figures from Africa generally support the idea that states with higher GNI per capita were less likely to suffer a state-based armed conflict after the Cold War. This might mean there is merit in pushing states above this threshold *regardless of the country's political system*. However, evidence from the Arab uprisings and other forms of recent popular protest in Africa suggest that economic growth alone is not an antidote to political instability if people's basic political rights are stifled.[99] Second, the fact that economic reversals also appeared significant suggests development policies should be designed to enhance the resilience of Africa's local economies from unexpected shocks. However, and third, as the Rwandan case during the 1980s and early 1990s illustrates, whatever policies are pursued, this must be done with a great sensitivity to the local political context and the survival strategies of the incumbent regime.

The Rwandan genocide and its deadly fallout in Zaire/DRC also held ominous lessons for the humanitarian international. But there were plenty more troublesome cases where relief agencies struggled to overcome the challenges thrown up by the incumbent regimes in Africa's war zones. Their job was also made more difficult by a variety of rebels and external governments and by their own organizational cultures. In this complicated context, de Waal's three rules for representing humanitarian action remain as pertinent today as they were in the mid-1990s when he wrote them:

> The first is: do not obscure power relations. In other words, be frank that relief agencies are service contractors to Western donors, are pursuing their own institutional interests and implicitly supporting the host authorities. The second is, do not claim to have long-term solutions. Do not speak about ‘justice’ or ‘long-term development’, and still less make any claims that current humanitarian activity is helping to achieve these goals. The third is, do not seek the media limelight. A high media profile risks the severe danger that humanitarian action will be misrepresented, for example it will be inflated, distorted or used as an alibi by donors.[100]

Notes

1 de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, p. xv. Thomas Weiss has made many similar points but uses the term ‘humanitarian business’. See Weiss, *Humanitarian Business*.

2 Cited in Goodhand, *Aiding Peace?*, p. 88.

3 Macrae et al., *Uncertain Power*, p. 3.

4 For example, some of the big US players, such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services and World Vision, received large amounts of their funding from USAID.

5 Cited in Goodhand, *Aiding Peace?*, p. 89.

6 Weiss, ‘Principles’. See also Goodhand, *Aiding Peace?*, pp. 92–6.

7 Bradol, ‘Introduction’, p. 6.

8 Weiss, ‘Principles’, p. 19.

9 de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, p. 148.

10 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, p. 130.

11 Reno, ‘The Sudan rebel perspective’.

12 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, p. 39.

13 Ibid., pp. 2, 213.

14 Menkhaus, ‘No Access’.

15 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 116–19.

16 The key piece of legislation is Executive Order 13224 issued by President George W. Bush on 23 September 2001.

17 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 122–7.

18 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, p. 38.

19 Forsythe, *The Humanitarians*, pp. 119–20.

20 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, pp. 9–10.

21 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 127–36.

22 Cited in Goodhand, *Aiding Peace?*, p. 91.

23 Transparency International, *Preventing Corruption*.

24 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, pp. 143, 128; Achvarina and Reich, 'No place to hide'.

25 Messiant, 'Angola', p. 118.

26 Lavergne and Weissman, 'Sudan', pp. 153–5.

27 Anderson, *Do No Harm*, chaps 4–5.

28 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, p. 39.

29 Shearer, 'Aiding'.

30 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, p. 218.

31 Rieff, 'Charity', p. 137.

32 'MSF forced to close all medical programmes in Somalia', 14 August 2013, http://www.msf.org/article243/msf-forced-close-all-medical-programmes-somalia.

33 Keen, *Complex Emergencies*, p. 121. See also de Waal, *Famine Crimes*.

34 de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, p. 221.

35 Shearer, 'Aiding', p. 198.

36 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, p. 219.

37 Cited in Weiss, *Humanitarian Business*, p. 3.

38 Shearer, 'Aiding', p. 189.

39 Terry, *Condemned to Repeat?*, p. 229.

40 de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, p. 217.

41 See Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid*, chaps 4, 5, 16 and 17.

42 See Hancock, *The Lords*, pp. 42ff; de Haan, *How the Aid Industry Works*; Mosse, *Cultivating Development*. This ‘business’ spends roughly $100 billion per year and between 1956 and 2006 is estimated to have spent a total of approximately $2.3 trillion (measured in 2006 dollars), much of it in Africa. Easterly and Pfutze, ‘Where does the money go?’, pp. 29, 51.

43 The figures are available from http://stats.oecd.org/.

44 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the economic causes’, pp. 568, 570–1. See also Dixon, ‘What causes civil wars?’, p. 714.

45 Dixon, ‘What causes civil wars?’, p. 714. See also Rice, Graff and Lewis, *Poverty and Civil War*, pp. 6–8.

46 Collier and Hoeffler, ‘On the incidence’, p. 14.

47 DFID, *Eliminating World Poverty*, p. 22.

48 I recognize that these figures could well be very misleading, as Morten Jerven's work demonstrates. Nonetheless, they can hopefully still make the logical point even if not much faith should be placed in the numbers themselves. See Jerven, *Poor Numbers* and *Africa*.

49 Since the first edition of this book was published, Mozambique was the only state in this category to experience a new state-based (minor) armed conflict (in 2013) and no state that had previously not suffered a PITF instability event did so.

50 Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, p. 41.

51 Ibid., p. 41.

52 Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, p. 77.

53 Chossudovsky, *The Globalization of Poverty*.

54 Storey, ‘Structural adjustment’, p. 366.

55 Some 80 per cent of the total investment budget of the government and a significant fraction of its operating budget. Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, pp. 226–7.

56 Ibid., pp. 7, 231.

57 Adelman and Suhrke, *Early Warning*; Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, pp. 70–81, 94.

58 Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, p. 8.

59 Ibid., pp. 40–2; Storey, ‘Structural adjustment’, p. 370.

60 World Bank, *Implementation*, p. iv. This was putting it mildly: Rwanda's government had clearly not implemented the adjustment programmes. Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, pp. 58–9.

61 Adelman and Suhrke, *Early Warning*.

62 World Bank, *Rwanda*, para. viii. This is not unique to Rwanda. Paul Collier estimated that 40 per cent of Africa's military spending has been inadvertently financed by aid. Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, p. 103.

63 In contrast to official policy, the Bank's staff working on Rwanda recognized the need to consult RPF representatives during the SAC negotiations and held joint meetings with the government and RPF after the Arusha negotiations from March to August 1993.

64 Uvin, *Aiding Violence*, p. 3.

65 Cited in Adebajo, ‘Ending’, p. 33.

66 Joseph and Gillies, ‘Smart aid’, p. 2.

67 Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

68 Reno, ‘Uganda's politics’.

69 See Callaghy ‘The search’, pp. 87–102.

70 Dijkstra, ‘What did US$18 billion achieve?’.

71 Sachs, ‘The strategic significance’, pp. 8–9.

72 See Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*.

73 The key document with regard to Africa was the so-called Berg Report (World Bank, *Accelerated Development*). For overviews of structural adjustment in Africa, see van de Walle, *African Economies*; Mkandawire and Soludo, *Our Continent*.

74 van de Walle, *African Economies*, p. 7.

75 Clapham, *Africa*, pp. 196–7.

76 Ibid., p. 195.

77 UN Secretary-General, *The Causes*, para. 67. See also Stevenson, *Preventing Conflict*, pp. 12–13.

78 See Paris, *At War's End* and Barnett, ‘Building a republican peace’.

79 *USAID Primer*, p. 38.

80 See van de Walle, *Overcoming Stagnation*, p. 43.

81 Ibid., pp. 41–2.

82 Ibid., pp. 1–2; Burnside and Dollar, ‘Aid, policies and growth’.

83 van de Walle, *Overcoming Stagnation*, p. 5.

84 The survey measures freedom – the opportunity to act spontaneously in a variety of fields outside the control of the government and other centres of potential domination – according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, at www.freedomhouse.org.

85 Easterly and Pfutze, ‘Where does the money go?’, pp. 41–2.

86 Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift*.

87 Commission for Africa, *Our Common Interest*, p. 61.

88 Richard Dowden, ‘Can Gordon save Africa?’, *The Observer*, 9 January 2005.

89 van de Walle, *African Economies*, pp. 7–8.

90 See, for example, Reno, ‘Old brigades’; Reno, *Corruption*; Reno, ‘Ironies’. See also Clapham, *Africa*, pp. 250–1.

91 OECD, ‘Paris’.

92 These ideas were not new. See Riddell, *Does Foreign Aid*, chap. 2.

93 See the list in van de Walle, *Overcoming Stagnation*, pp. 7–11. The exceptions were new democracies (Mali and São Tomé and Príncipe) and the other two African states awarded a ‘free’ rating by Freedom House: Senegal and Ghana.

94 OECD, *Better Aid*.

95 By 2008–9 roughly 27 per cent of UK aid was delivered via budget support. During 2010–11, the UK was providing budget support to nine African states: Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

96 Barkan, ‘Rethinking’, p. 68.

97 Ibid., p. 72.

98 Ibid., p. 75.

99 For a relevant discussion see Branch and Mampilly, *Africa Uprising*.

100 de Waal, *Famine Crimes*, pp. 220–1.

Conclusion

This book had two principal aims: to understand why Africa experienced so many armed conflicts after the Cold War and to examine the main international attempts to end them.

On the first question, analysis quickly runs into the perennial philosophical headache of how to combine general ideas about the underlying conditions that increase the likelihood of warfare with more specific trigger factors that spark particular wars. The answer lies in using insights from quantitative and qualitative research. Conceptual frameworks which aim to explain warfare in general and the more sophisticated quantitative approaches are good at providing clues about how best to narrow down the list of ingredients which played important roles across a variety of Africa's armed conflicts. On their own, however, general frameworks risk downplaying or ignoring local nuances and idiosyncrasies, while quantitative studies are built on unreliable foundations and are open to widely different interpretations of the data. Consequently, a sophisticated understanding of one of Africa's particular war recipes requires the analyst to move beyond the abstract level to more historical and sociological forms of study.

Part II of this book attempted to do this by examining five of the most widely debated ingredients that were said to have played significant roles in many of Africa's war recipes: governance, resources, sovereignty, ethnicity and religion. Based on my survey of these ingredients since 1990, I submit that, at the abstract level, students interested in understanding why Africa's wars break out could do far worse than focus their attention, at least initially, upon the dynamics within the continent's neopatrimonial regimes, the political struggles related to issues of sovereignty and self-determination, and the manipulation of ethnic identities by political elites (see chapters 3, 5 and 6). The discussions in chapters 4 and 7 suggest that analysts should be more sceptical about viewing so-called natural resources and religion as principal ingredients in the outbreak of Africa's wars. Nevertheless, both of these affected the dynamics of at least some armed conflicts in important ways. Struggles over resources were particularly significant for many of the localized, non-state pastoralist conflicts that

persisted across large parts of the continent. Moreover, debates about religion and warfare in Africa were given renewed impetus after the Arab uprising of 2011 and subsequent rise in armed groups claiming inspiration from a warped version of Islamic theology. Resources and religion are therefore a more pertinent source of study for those interested in why particular armed conflicts endure and assume certain forms over time.

If there is a thread that links dynamics across the two worlds of Africa's armed conflicts, I suggest that it is to be found in the nature of the continent's state–society complexes, especially the dynamics associated with the politics of regime survival in weak states. In terms of the levels-of-analysis framework offered in chapter 2, it is my sense that the political strategies pursued by regimes to maintain their privileged status provided the critical link between important local-level dynamics and the various regional and globalizing networks, structures and processes. When their status and legitimacy was directly threatened, the tendency for regimes to respond by instrumentalizing disorder and using violence to try and restore their authority only exacerbated the risks of war. Once armed conflict began, it was these same dynamics which often prevented rebels being comprehensively defeated and which encouraged plunder and the manipulation of extreme ethnic and/or religious bigotry to marshal support. Either way, it was usually ordinary civilians who bore the brunt of the violence. These dynamics also encouraged the persistently large numbers of non-state armed conflicts, many of which were fought on the margins of Africa's society of states.

Discriminatory and oppressive systems of governance which lacked effective means of resolving conflicts without resorting to violence were thus an important ingredient in every one of Africa's wars. Reading the more historical and sociological studies of many of these conflicts, one cannot help but be struck by the importance of political structures. Whether it was the problems faced by regimes in weak states which were unable to assemble armed forces capable of fending off even small rebellions, or the challenges raised by powerful but oppressive state institutions which unleashed genocidal campaigns on their own people, or simply the limited ability of regimes to control what other armed actors did in ‘their’ territory, governance was a central ingredient in Africa's war recipes. Understanding who rules, according to what (formal and informal) rules, and the rules by

which rulers are changed should be at the heart of conflict analysis. In that sense, I strongly endorse Christopher Clapham's point that ‘The place to start trying to understand any political crisis is always with the government in power.’[1]

As the structures which frame political incentives and opportunities and determine how resources should be allocated, systems of governance are crucial to understanding and responding to war because they are fundamentally about conflict management. Indeed, one leading theorist in the field of conflict resolution summed up the situation by saying ‘Governance is conflict management.’[2] This is why international actors must reflect upon how their policies can help to demilitarize governance structures in Africa's war-torn and weak states.[3] It will also mean revisiting the fundamental question of how much effort should be invested in retaining Africa's current international borders rather than supporting political communities that currently lack juridical sovereignty but may actually work far better for their people.[4]

As the analysis in part III of this book illustrated, regime political strategies also had huge repercussions for the major international attempts to end Africa's wars, namely, the effort to construct a new African peace and security architecture (APSA), as well as a variety of peacemaking, peacekeeping and assistance initiatives.

While the attempts to build the new APSA made some notable progress, particularly after the creation of the AU's Peace and Security Council in 2004, it clearly did not have a transformational effect on the political dynamics of organized violence on the continent. Put simply, these new institutions and instruments did not fundamentally alter the nature of politics in Africa's weak states or the international politics of statehood. Nor did they put a stop to the excesses of neopatrimonialism or the manipulation of ethnicity, and to a lesser extent religion, by power-hungry elites. They did, however, strengthen a more restrictive definition of the means by which it was legitimate to gain entry into the club of African sovereigns. Since the late 1990s the OAU/AU took a more consistent stance against coups as a mechanism to gain membership of the African society of states. And, more recently, the AU has explored how it might operationalize a broader definition of what it calls ‘unconstitutional changes of government’ to

include electoral fraud and the manipulation of state constitutions to increase the length of presidential terms. To the extent that these initiatives delegitimize violence as a tool of politics, they were a welcome step in the right direction. But, as the crises in Darfur, Somalia and elsewhere demonstrate, they also helped to obscure the continued lack of substantive political consensus within the AU over how to apply its new principles and instruments in response to specific events.

When it came to the various international peacemaking initiatives discussed in chapter 9, most of them proved unable to transform local neopatrimonial dynamics. This highlights the importance of Alex de Waal's ideas about peacemaking in Africa's ‘political marketplace’.[5] As a consequence, most mediation efforts ended up having to embrace patronage politics to the extent necessary to ensure that the system did not revert to war and that those candidates at the top of the patrimonial pyramid did not engage in excessive levels of corruption and oppression. In the majority of cases, it was local rather than external actors who retained the greatest ability to shape outcomes on the ground. In comparison to local political elites, most external actors lacked staying power, sufficient leverage and sometimes political acumen. Nor were they usually willing to invest the amount of time, effort and resources that it would take to acquire such things. The rather depressing conclusion that follows is that, if powerful local groups really want to wage war, external forces will have a tough time trying to stop them. If correct, this means that most of the keys required to unlock the secret of building stable peace on the continent are held by local actors who are concerned primarily with local issues. In such circumstances, conflict resolution will not succeed unless these local issues are effectively addressed and local actors are persuaded, incentivized or coerced into adopting less violent forms of politics.

In sum, the top-down peacemaking of elite bargains will not offer any quick fixes to Africa's wars. Although it will take longer and be even more difficult, peacemaking efforts in the political marketplace should be reconceptualized as an ongoing process of bargaining designed to demilitarize politics and the institutions that sustained the war. The long-term aim of this process is to delegitimize the idea that violence offers the surest route to status, wealth and political power. A good place to start is

with the security sector, or what Robert Bates called ‘the specialists in violence’.[6]

In such challenging political contexts, the numerous peace operations analysed in chapter 10 were only ever likely to address some of the worst symptoms of armed conflict. Indeed, most operations were so badly resourced that they could not cope with the symptoms of war, let alone address the underlying conditions. Over the course of the post-Cold War period, the world's peacekeeping organizations did become more professional, and greater numbers of peacekeepers were deployed to Africa's war zones. But they were given an increasingly daunting set of tasks and remained plagued by a perennial gap between means and ends. Closing this gap should be the fundamental starting point for any future reform initiatives.

A similar story was evident in the international attempts to provide humanitarian assistance and establish development projects in Africa's conflict zones. Both the humanitarian international and the development industry examined in chapter 11 grew larger and more professionalized after 1990. But neither of these instruments proved capable of transforming political dynamics within neopatrimonial regimes, persuading the belligerents of the merits of abiding by humanitarian principles or pursuing genuinely national development policies. Indeed, for much of this period, too many people succumbed to disease and malnutrition and development indicators in too many African states went backwards.

Taken together, the preceding insights add up to a hugely daunting agenda that will require considerable time, money and, most of all, political effort. Nevertheless, as one African proverb has it: peace may be costly but it is worth the expense.

Notes

1 Clapham, ‘Comments’.

2 Zartman, *Governance*, p. 1.

3 Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics*.

4 See Herbst, *States and Power*, pp. 251–72; Englebert, *Africa*, pp. 250–61.

5 de Waal, *The Real Politics*.

6 Bates, *When Things Fell Apart*. For some constructive ideas on how to do this, see Ouédraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism*.

Appendix

Peace Operations in Africa, 1990–2015

Mission	Location	Dates	Deployed size (est. max. uniformed)
UNAVEM I	Angola	1988–91	70
UNTAG	Namibia	1989–90	7,500
ECOMOG	Liberia	1990–99	12,040
JVC	Mozambique	1990–92	30
MINURSO	Western Sahara	1991–	237
OAU Mission to Western Sahara	Western Sahara	1991–???	Unclear
UNAVEM II	Angola	1991–95	350
OAU MOT	Rwanda	1991	15
OAU NMOG I	Rwanda	1991–93	57
ONUMOZ	Mozambique	1992–94	8,125
UNOSOM I	Somalia	1992–93	4,270
UNITAF	Somalia	1992–93	37,000
UNOMIL	Liberia	1993–97	303
UNOMUR	Rwanda	1993	81
UNAMIR I	Rwanda	1993–94	2,500
UNOSOM II	Somalia	1993–95	28,000
OAU NMOG II	Rwanda	1993	70
OMIB	Burundi	1993–96	47
UNASOG	Chad,Libya	1994	9
UNAMIR II	Rwanda	1994–96	5,500
Commonwealth Peacekeeping Assistance Group (CPAG)	South Africa	1994	33
UNAVEM III	Angola	1995–97	4,220
MONUA	Angola	1997–99	3,000
MISAB	Central African Republic	1997–98	1,100

ECOMOG	Sierra Leone	1997–2000	14,000
OMIC	Comoros	1997–98	20
MINURCA	Central African Republic	1998–2000	1,350
UNOMSIL	Sierra Leone	1998–99	217
ECOMOG	Guinea-Bissau	1998–99	750
MONUC -a	DR Congo	1999–2002	4,278
UNAMSIL	Sierra Leone	1999–2005	17,670
OAU Observer Mission	DR Congo	1999–2000	43
UNMEE	Ethiopia, Eritrea	2000–08	4,200
OLMEE, AULMEE	Ethiopia, Eritrea	2000–08	43
Operation Palliser (UK)	Sierra Leone	2000	1,300
Operations Basilica, Silkman (UK)	Sierra Leone	2000–05	250
SAPSD	Burundi	2001–09	754
OMIC 2	Comoros	2001–02	14
CEN-SAD	Central African Republic	2001–02	300
JCM and IMU	Sudan	2002–05	24
ECOMICI	Côte d'Ivoire	2002–04	1,500
Operation Licorne (France)	Côte d'Ivoire	2002–	4,000
FOMUC (ECCAS)	Central African Republic	2002–08	380
OMIC 3	Comoros	2002	39
MINUCI	Côte d'Ivoire	2003–04	76
MONUC -b	DR Congo	2003–10	22,016
ECOMIL	Liberia	2003	3,600
UNMIL	Liberia	2003–	16,115
Operation Artemis / IEMF	DR Congo	2003	2,205
AMIB	Burundi	2003–04	3,250
ONUB	Burundi	2004–06	5,770
ONUCI	Côte d'Ivoire	2004–	10,954
AMIS	Sudan	2004–07	7,700
MIOC	Comoros	2004	41
UNMIS	Sudan	2005–11	10,519
EUSEC-CONGO	DR Congo	2005–	50

EU Support to AMIS 2	Sudan	2005–07	50
EUFOR-RD	DR Congo	2006	2,275
AMISEC	Comoros	2006	1,260
AMISOM	Somalia	2007–	22,126
MAES	Comoros	2007–08	356
MINURCAT	Chad	2007–10	5,525
Operation Democracy in the Comoros (AU)	Comoros	2008	1,800
EUFOR-Chad	Chad	2008–09	3,700
UNAMID	Sudan	2008–	21,600
MICOPAX	Central African Republic	2008–13	730
EU SSR	Guinea-Bissau	2008–10	33
MONUSCO	DR Congo	2010–	22,016
EUTM Somalia	Somalia–Uganda	2010–	125
UNMISS	Sudan	2011–	7,900
UNISFA	Sudan	2011–	4,250
MISSANG-GB (Angola)	Guinea-Bissau	2011–12	200
ECOMIB	Guinea-Bissau	2012–	629
AFISMA	Mali	2012–13	9,620
Operation Serval (France)	Mali	2013–	4,000
EUTM Mali	Mali	2013–	450
MINUSMA	Mali	2013–	12,640
Operation Sangaris (France)	Central African Republic	2013–	1,600
MISCA	Central African Republic	2013–14	3,652
EUFOR RCA	Central African Republic	2014–15	700
MINUSCA	Central African Republic	2014–	11,820
MNJTF vs Boko Haram	West Africa	2015–	8,700

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